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CHILDREN'S BOOK  
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37







THE  
VILLAGE BOYS:

OR

STORIES TO PERSUADE BOYS NOT  
TO QUARREL.

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BY OLD HARLO,  
Author of "Down the Hill."

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BOSTON :  
WILLIAM PEIRCE, 9 CORNHILL.  
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# THE VILLAGE BOYS.

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## CHAPTER I.

### HAVERDALE AND ITS BOYS.

HAVERDALE is a small town among the mountains. Through one corner of it runs a river, upon the banks of which is the village. It is a beautiful place; for both Upper and Lower streets are wide and ornamented with trees, and many pleasant lanes connect the two. At the upper end of the village near the school-house, is a large common, extending between the two streets, at the farther side of which, near the road, is an oak, around which the boys assemble to play.

There are many boys in Haverdale, some of whom I like much, for they are kind and good natured, always cheerful

and pleasant, and willing to oblige their companions. Several of them are also conscientious boys, desirous of doing what they honestly think is their duty. There are, however, some who are bad, and deserving the disapprobation of all good men ;—for instance, there are Nathaniel Page, Ebenezer Smith, and Daniel Brown, three boys as bad as any that I know. One morning the boys were playing *Round-about* on the common, and as soon as John White's side was out, he said—

“I cannot play any more, for I must go home.”

“Go home !” cried Nat Page. “No, you shall not go home ; if you do I will whip you. You had your first *in*, and now you may tend us out.”

“Father told me to come home in half an hour, and it is time now, and I ought to go.”

“I don't care what your father said ; you have got to stay till the game is through, so go and tend out.” Saying this he gave him a violent shove, and turned away.

Daniel Brown also, once directed a traveller, who asked of him the way to a neighboring town, to the wrong road, so that the man walked nearly two miles before he discovered his mistake, and was then obliged to return all that distance and start again. Thus it was with these boys,—they were full of their mischief,—they continually sought to amuse themselves by vexing others. But they were always unhappy themselves. Their case reminded me of what I once heard a Boston boy say, as I was walking the streets of that city, and saw three boys approaching at a distance, one of whom was crying most bitterly. As we met and passed, I heard one of the party saying to the others—

“Well, an *ugly* fellow *never* gets anything by it.” And so it was with the boys I have been describing; *they never got anything by their ugliness*. They were so selfish and unkind in all their conduct, that they had no real friends. Besides, their evil dispositions destroyed all peace and happiness in their own minds. You will understand the reason of this, if you remember your feel-

ings when you are quarrelling;—are you happy at such times? I do not mean when your antagonist whips you, for it is evident that you are not, in such a case; but when you gain the mastery; are you happy *then*? If it is with you, as it used to be with me, you will perceive that you *are not*,—that the angry feelings which you indulge destroy your peace. Such anger is sinful; and God has so constituted us, that when we indulge sinful feelings, we are unhappy. So it was with these boys,—their bad dispositions *troubled* them.

One Saturday afternoon, as Nathaniel Page was running round the corner of the house into the street, his father called out—

“Nat, Nat, here Nat, where are you running now? you are always—continually—playing; I want you to stay at home this afternoon and work; you may go into the garden and weed that bed.”

“Which one?” said Nat in a sulky tone, as he took off his jacket.

“The carrot bed,—the one I set you at work upon the other day; and don’t you stir a step from it again till it is done.”

Nat went to work, and had about half finished the bed when he heard a loud shout from the common. He instantly leaped up, climbed the high garden fence, and looked off in that direction, when he saw a company of twenty boys in eager pursuit of a foot-ball. James Adams and Henry Bell were the foremost of the party, and James had just reached the ball, and was about to kick it with all his force, when Henry, tripping his heel, threw him headlong to the ground, and kicked the ball himself, while the boys gave a shout of laughter in applause of the exploit. As Nat heard the second shout, he jumped from the fence and ran a few steps towards the boys; but remembering the command of his father, and fearing that he would see him, he reluctantly returned to the garden. He continued his work for twenty minutes longer, when he saw his father leave the yard and go far down the street on business. Knowing that his absence would not now be noticed, and regardless of the command of his father, of the dictates of his conscience, and of the will of God, he

leaped the fence and ran off to play. What took place when he met his father at night I do not know, but this manifests Nat's character,—he had no regard to duty, but was a wicked self-willed boy. The other bad boys whom I have mentioned, were very much like Nat in their general character, though their dispositions were various in some respects.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE GRAY SQUIRRELS.

THE black barber of Haverdale was a poor man; and as the town was small, the business of shaving was not sufficient for his support. He therefore kept for sale, a great variety of candies, nuts and fruits, and in a word, sweetmeats of every description. In the summer season, he had an awning of canvass extended before his shop, and beneath it was displayed in rich profusion, all his store, as apples, pears, peaches, melons, nuts, figs, raisins, &c. He had also a long bench in readiness for the weary; and many a boy, and many a man, as he sauntered languidly along on a sultry day, has been induced to sit there in the cooling shade, and buy his delicious fruit. Sometimes he exposed a chained monkey to view, whose antics drew to his shop a crowd of men and boys, who would often buy fruit and nuts for the mischievous Jocko. When the novelty of this had

passed away, he exchanged the monkey for a parrot or a canary bird, or some other animal that would attract attention and keep customers around him.

One afternoon in summer, Henry Jones and his companions had been to sail, and as they passed the barber's shop on their way home, they espied beneath the awning two gray squirrels leaping briskly from side to side in a revolving cage. At sight of them, they all, with many exclamations of surprise and delight, ran towards the shop. The squirrels stopped for a moment, and folding their long bushy tails upon their backs, gazed in fear at the boys; presently one leaped the back of the other, and climbing the side of the cage, set it in motion, and the two were again in full exercise, leaping and jumping with all speed as the cage revolved beneath them.

"Oh, what beauties! how soft their fur is," exclaimed one of the boys.

"Oh, Mr. Sanger, where did you get them?" said another.

"Ha, my boys, these are the beauties for you! just see them skip over the wires;

they do n't seem to touch them at all. Now if you wish to see how neatly they will peel a chesnut, just look here." So saying he took a nut and presented it to the largest one. "There, this one is Dick; the other is Tom. Tom is as funny a little rogue as ever you saw. He is always snatching away Dick's nuts. See there—see—he has got it. Ah, you little villain!"

"What will you sell them for, Mr. Sanger?"

"Sell them! I would n't sell them for my life,—the dear little things."

"Where did you get them?"

"I bought them of a farmer's boy; he caught them in the woods."

"Caught them! why, how did he catch them?"

"In a trap, I suppose."

"A trap! why, what kind of a trap?"

"Why, Henry, what makes you so eager to-day? I suppose he caught them in a large wooden box-trap, such as is used for rats."

"Well then, I'll have a squirrel very quick."

The boys remained there for half an hour, feeding the squirrels and making many inquiries about them; and as they walked home their thoughts were upon the same subject. Henry said that he had a large rat-trap down cellar which he could easily fix for the purpose; and he proposed that all should come to his father's the next day, and see what could be done. Accordingly on the morrow all were together in the shed, with hammer, hatchet and saw, repairing old traps and making new ones. In a day or two, every boy, and there were as many as a dozen of them, had his trap ready; and on Wednesday night they were seen marching out of the yard in a line, each one with his trap under his arm, the corn and spindle rolling about within, and the string hanging down behind.

"Forward march,—quick step,—right wheel," exclaimed Henry; and they turned rapidly round the corner of the fence, and marched off in high glee to the woods. Their squirrel ground was nearly a mile distant. They proceeded for a short space along the road, then, climbing the fence,

crossed an open field and entered the woods. The rest of their way was along a cart-path, which led them through a forest of tall trees; the ground was low and marshy, and well covered with under-brush. Farther on they gradually ascended a high hill, the sides of which were covered with many oaks, and chesnuts, and bushes of the hazelnut, and decayed trees which had fallen from old age, or been blown down by the wind. It was here that they set their traps, for the squirrels were numerous upon this hill, in consequence of the abundance of nuts which they found in autumn.

“Halloo! who is there?” exclaimed Henry, as he heard a dog bark in the woods; and the moment after, a black and white spaniel was seen bounding along over the dead leaves.

“That looks like Nat Page’s dog,” said another boy. “I hope he is not here, I am sure.”

“Well, I *am* here notwithstanding,” said Nat, who was now seen coming down the hill. “So you are out catching squirrels,—are you? I should laugh to see *you* catch

a squirrel,—such a little bungling fellow as you are. And you made that trap, I suppose, and *think you shall catch a squirrel in it?* Ha! ha! ha! James, you are a bigger fool than I thought you was.”

“It is as good a trap as you can make, in spite of your boasting.”

“Well, we shall see how many squirrels you’ll catch; I will give you ten dollars apiece.”

The rest of the boys rather laughed at poor James, for his trap was, in truth, the worst one, being so loosely nailed together, that, as Nat said, “a squirrel could pick it to pieces.”

“Henry, where shall you set your traps?” asked Nat.

“That is our business. We shall find a place I will warrant you.”

“You are as clever a set of fellows as ever I saw. I suppose you think I want to spring your traps, or steal your squirrels,—do you? I am half inclined to hunt them up and break them in pieces now just to plague you.”

“You will not wish to do it more than once.” So saying, the boys marched on, leaving Nat very angry in the path, and trying in vain to set his dog upon them. Nat. thus acted very wrong, but they ought to have spoken to him more kindly than they did. If they had been more kind and conciliating, they might have saved much of the trouble that followed.

The boys soon left the path, and turned into the bushes a short distance, where they set their traps in various situations, on stumps and logs, and near squirrel holes at the foot of the trees. It was nearly dark before they returned home.

The next morning before sunrise, Henry and his companions were all up, and walking hastily on towards their squirrel ground, to see what success they had had; but to their disappointment every trap was just as they left it.

They visited them again in the evening, but with no better success; and for several days they returned to them morning and evening, but no squirrel was there. They heard the little creatures chirping in the

woods, and saw them leaping from bough to bough among the trees, but none ventured to descend and touch the tempting bait.

The boys wondered much that it should be so, and began to despair of success, when one of their friends, William Lane, went to Mr. Jones's in the evening, and seeing Henry with others in the yard, called out—

“Well, Henry, who caught the squirrel this morning?”

“What squirrel?” said they all.

“Was there not one in your trap?”

“No.”

“One of them was sprung when I went by this morning.”

“There *was*? which one?”

“The one which was upon the end of that log that rested upon the stump.”

“Why, that was yours, Henry;” exclaimed a dozen voices at once; “but are you *sure* it was sprung, William?”

“Yes indeed; perfectly sure. It was not more than two rods from the path.”

“Why did n’t you go and see if there was one there?”

“I was in great haste, and I knew that I could not see it well, if I went, it being shut up so closely in the box.”

“I propose that we go up there.”

“Agreed,” said all, and they went.

When they came to the trap, all were eager to examine it.

“There,” said William, “there has been a squirrel here, any boy may know; do you see the corn,—how it has been eaten? and now look at the hole for the spindle,—do you see the marks of teeth about it?”

“Well, where is it, William? what has become of it?”

“Why, some one has stolen it, and then set the trap again, thinking that you would not notice that some of the bait had been eaten.”

“Ah, yes! and Nat Page is the rogue, I know; I was sorry to meet him when we came up, for I thought he would do us some mischief.”

“It is just like him,” said several of the boys.

"Did he know that you had traps here?" asked William.

"He knew that we had set some in the woods; but not exactly where."

"Oh, well, he did the mischief, I presume; he is a bad fellow, and I wish to have as little to do with him as possible. But I pity him more than I do you, for such a boy is always miserable."

"He deserves a whipping, and I would give him one if I could; if I was as strong as you are, William, I would give him one every day in the week," said one of the smaller boys.

"Perhaps he does deserve it," said William smiling, "but I do not know that I ought to give it to him, if he does deserve it."

"Why, if you *can* do it, and he *deserves* it, it is very clear that you *ought* to."

"Not quite so clear, James; for it is our duty to feel kindly towards all around us, and to do them all the good we can, not evil, even though they do injure us."

"Well, a good whipping will do him more good than anything else, I'll assure you."

"But why do you wish him to have the whipping? Is it to do him good? or is it to gratify your anger?"

"Why, I suppose I should be glad to see him whipped; but it would do him just as much good notwithstanding."

"That may be; but is it right to whip a boy, with such feelings? how would God regard it?"

"Why, do you think he wishes Nat to go on in this way without punishment?"

"No, but it is not for *us* to punish him; we must leave that with his father and with God; and in the future life, He will punish him for this and all his other sins, unless he becomes a good boy. In the mean time, we ought fully to forgive him, and do him all the good we can."

"You think then we must never whip a boy if he is ever so bad—I don't believe that."

"Nor do I; I think there may be circumstances in which it is perfectly right to do it. If it is right to hang a bad man, I can see no reason why we may not whip a bad boy; but we must be very careful in such

cases not to do it to gratify our anger, for if we do, we sin."

I think that William, though in general a very sensible boy, was mistaken in this. There are a great many reasons why men may properly punish a bad man, while yet boys ought not to undertake to punish a bad boy. We shall hereafter give some of these reasons.

All the boys believed that Nat had taken the squirrel, though they had no positive evidence of it; and as they walked home, they thought of various ways by which they hoped to learn whether he was the thief or not. If they should find that he had a squirrel, they thought there would be no doubt that he had stolen it from Henry's trap; if not, they thought it would be pretty clear that he did not do the mischief.

The next day, Henry and several others went to the barber's shop, to see his squirrels. They found Nat there; and the moment they came up, Nat began to appear very uneasy. He had lost all his accustomed boldness and independence; instead of speaking in his ordinary loud and fearless

manner, he was very silent. He did not stand near the rest of the boys, nor did he look them in the face, but rather turned away from them into the corner of the shop, and employed himself in picking up nutshells and strings, and anything that was upon the floor, in order that he might not be confronted by the boys. If any man had seen him, and knew what had happened to the squirrel trap, he would have said that he was guilty; especially would he have believed it, had he seen him a little while afterwards, when Henry turned to him and said—

“Have you got a squirrel, Nat?”

Nat colored much, and his heart beat very quick, but without looking up he answered in a confused manner—

“No, but I wish I had. Why did you ask the question?”

The boys did not more than half believe his answer; and when two or three days after, they heard that one of the boys in the lower part of the town had a squirrel, and that he bought it of Nat Page on the same day that one had been taken from

Henry's trap, they had no doubt that Nat had really committed the theft. Their suspicions were indeed true. He had stolen the squirrel, and wished to keep it, but fearing that his theft would be discovered, he sold it the same day for half a peck of apples.

Nat soon learned that he was suspected, and therefore thought it best to keep away from the squirrel ground, for the present, which he did; and while he kept himself at a distance, the boys took several squirrels, though they were generally small red ones. Henry, I remember, caught one first; it was a beautiful striped squirrel; and had you seen with what a light and happy heart he carried the box trap in his hands, holding it up before his eyes, and constantly peeping in at the spindle hole, to see his trembling captive, while the other boys were eagerly crowding about to get the next peep, you would have felt gladness in your own heart, and would have rejoiced with the happy boys.

After Henry's success they had new hope, and doubled their efforts; they selected the most tempting bait, that the squirrel might

be allured to taste; and they set their traps in the most delicate manner, that when he was fairly within, the slightest touch should spring it. In consequence of this increased care, they succeeded in taking several, as I have mentioned; but they were not fully satisfied with these, for they were the common red squirrel, and they had constantly in mind the beautiful gray squirrels of the barber. Not only were these gray squirrels more beautiful than the others, but they were also more rare, and on this account the boys prized them more highly.

Henry was especially desirous of obtaining one of them, for his father had promised him a revolving cage when he should do it; and when he saw, far up in the trees, a large gray squirrel frisking about among the branches, and twittering down at him in perfect safety, he was almost vexed with the provoking little animal, because he would not descend and gnaw the tempting bait in his trap.

A fortnight after Nat had stolen the squirrel, he ventured to visit the traps again; but fearing to meet some one, he

went very early, as soon as it was light. He had no distinct intention of stealing another; on the contrary, he thought he would only see what there was in the traps and then go away. His conscience had troubled him so much for his former theft, that he shrunk from the thought of committing another. The case is, that God has given to every boy a conscience, which tells him what is right, and what is wrong in his conduct. If a boy is inclined to steal, something within tells him that it is wrong to steal. The boy knows the moment he thinks of it, that it is wicked to do so; he knows that it is contrary to the law of God, and if he does it, notwithstanding this knowledge, he immediately feels very unhappy. So it is in regard to lying; so it is in regard to swearing;—conscience tells him that such acts are wrong; and if he is guilty of them, he is immediately reprov'd. Wherever he goes, conscience is present within him, reprov'ing his sin. This was the case with Nat Page. When he first thought of taking the squirrel, his conscience told him that it was wrong—he felt

within that it was wicked ; and when he still purposed to take it, he could hardly help blushing for guilt ; for, though no man saw him, he knew that the feelings of his heart which prompted him to steal, were wicked, and he feared God, for he knew that God hates all sin. When he took the squirrel he was unhappy, for conscience said he was sinning ; when he sold it he was unhappy, for conscience said he was sinning ; and when he ate the apples he was unhappy, for conscience said he had sinned. Wherever he went he bore about with him the remembrance of his sin ; and he felt that in disobeying conscience he had displeased a holy God. This destroyed his peace. 'Tis the same with every boy. God has given a conscience to all, and if the reader of this will remember some of his principal actions for the past month, and will think of the feelings which he had immediately before and immediately after them, he will find that a feeling within said that such an act was right, and that a certain other act was wrong,—and if he felt inclined to do the wrong, he will find

that conscience spoke very plainly. I wish all the boys would remember this, and always hereafter ask of their conscience what they should do, and always obey its voice, for this is God speaking to man.

Nat had not repented of his sin and asked forgiveness of God; of course the remembrance of his guilt rendered him continually unhappy, and he did not mean to steal another; still he thought he would visit the traps and see what was there. Moreover he was disposed to do some kind of mischief, for though he was afraid to *steal* because he had suffered so much from his last theft, yet he hated the boys very much because they disliked him. He walked along much troubled by his own revengeful feelings, and seeing James' trap half concealed among the bushes, he took up a stone and throwing it with all his spite, stove off one side of it; he however soon regretted this, for when he came to Henry's trap, he found that it was sprung and had a noble gray squirrel in it. It was so beautiful that he was much inclined to take it, notwithstanding the resolution

which he had formed; but he feared that the trap which he had just spoiled, would lead to inquiry as to who was the author of its destruction, and thus, in some way, make known that he had stolen the squirrel. He stood by the side of the log on which the trap was placed, one moment, peeping eagerly in at the spindle hole to see the beautiful creature, and the next, casting an anxious, troubled and guilty look far down towards the cart-path to see that no one was approaching. He thought he was unseen, and with a fearful and guilty heart, resolved that he would carry it off, secure the squirrel, and then return and set the trap, again before the boys appeared.

He put the trap under his arm, and was just concealed in the bushes, when he heard some one say—

“Put that trap down, if you please, sir.”

This voice startled him very much, and he colored deeply. He knew not how to escape. His first thought was to run; but knowing it would be in vain, he ventured to look round, and seeing no one but William Lane climbing over the log, he tried

to drive away his blushes as much as possible, and assuming a bold countenance and calm manner, he said—

“Oh, William, look here ; Henry has caught a noble squirrel this morning. I was going to carry it to him.”

“Oh, Nat, what a lie ! If you were going to carry this squirrel to Henry, why in the world were you going off into the bushes in that direction, when it is as near again in the direct road ?”

“You had better not tell me I lie ; if you do, you will repent it, I can tell you.”

“Nat Page, hear me. You think that I am afraid of you ; but I tell you once for all, that I am *not*. You dare not strike me. You may bully about as much as you please, but I regard it no more than I should a musquito buzzing in my ears. I do not wish to whip you, but I shall do it unless you are very careful. As to your lying, I have no doubt that you are guilty of it. I have no idea that you intended to carry that squirrel to Henry. I believe, I *fully* believe that you intended to steal it, as you did the red one which you sold to that boy.

And why do you blush so, if you are not guilty? Your own conscience condemns you; you know it, Nat. I suppose you thought you was not seen; but I have seen you through the whole of it. I was in the bushes when you came up, and hearing some one walking along, I suspected who it was, and dodged behind a tree, that I might watch you. I saw you when you dashed the trap in pieces with your stone. I saw you too, when you peered round with such a guilty look among the bushes, to see that no one noticed you; and I saw you also when you thievishly skulked away into the bushes here; so now let me have that trap."

I suppose all my readers will at once perceive that in the whole of this speech, and in the tone and manner in which William Lane first accosted the bad boy, there was much that was harsh and improper. A kind and forbearing tone is always doubly necessary, when we are addressing those who are doing wrong. William's tone of reproach and defiance exasperated Nat, instead of leading him to

feel guilty and ashamed, and he said in reply—

“No, I shall not let you have this trap ; so keep your distance.”

“Nat, I do not wish to have a quarrel with you ; but I am determined to have that trap, and if I must whip you in order to get it, I shall do it.” Saying thus, William clasped Nat in his arms, and immediately a violent struggle ensued ;—for some time Nat clung to it firmly, but perceiving that he could not hold it, he pushed it from him, and endeavored to kick open the lid that the squirrel might escape. William, however, sprung to the trap and prevented it.

“I should think you would be ashamed, Nat,” said he ; “you wished to steal the squirrel, and because I would not let you do that, you tried to let it get away. If you had done it, I should have whipped you well.”

Nat rose from the ground, and instantly flew at William in great anger, kicking and striking him with all fury. William endured it patiently for a moment, but perceiving that he became worse, he put

the trap upon the ground, clasped him again in his arms, threw him down, and with his handkerchief bound his hands behind him. Then reaching to a bush near at hand, he broke from it a large switch, and said—

“Now, Nat, I have got you down, and I have a noble switch, and unless you say you will go off peaceably, I shall whip you; but if you will promise to go away, and offer me no further violence, you may go.”

William had Nat completely in his power; he had bound his hands and laid him with his face to the ground, and sitting upon his back, kept him forcibly in that position; and though Nat kicked and writhed in every direction, hoping to throw him off, it was in vain, for William's weight and strength overmatched him; and he at last lay exhausted, overwhelmed with mortified pride and anger. William again told him that if he would promise to go away peaceably, he might, for he did not wish to hurt him. Nat in his pride refused to promise any such thing, and while he stubbornly contended against submission, they were

surrounded by the other boys, who had come to visit their traps. When they learned the state of the case, they burned with indignation, and urged William to give Nat the full punishment dictated by their revenge. But William knew that this would be wrong; and when they kicked and jeered the exhausted boy, he told them to stop, saying that they ought not to indulge such angry feelings,—that for his part, he had no intention of whipping him, if he would only promise to go peaceably away, and do them no more injury,—that he meant to forgive him, and leave it with God to punish him as he deserved.

Nat, seeing that the whipping would surely come unless he submitted, reluctantly promised to do as they required; whereupon William untied his hands and let him go; and he went into the bushes doggedly muttering forth his anger; and when he was fairly out of their reach, he gave vent more fully to his passions by casting stones and calling them all manner of wicked names.

Now do you think that William Lane did right or wrong in this transaction? "Right," will probably be the answer of most of the boys who will read this story. "He exercised," perhaps you think, "a great deal of patience and forbearance, and kept his temper well through the whole."

So he did; yet still I think he did wrong. Though the important question is not whether William Lane, in this one instance, did right or wrong, but whether, as a general principle, it is right for boys to take the redress of injuries, in such cases, into their own hands. I think it is not right for these reasons, viz:—

The first is, that even where it is successful, it will furnish a remedy only in a very few cases. For generally, bad boys oppress and injure those who are *smaller*, not *larger*, than they are themselves. Consequently, in almost all cases, the boy is not able to redress himself. This is one reason why the plan of violent redress is not a good one, as a general plan.

The second is, that even where it is, for the time, successful, it will not be likely to

be final. Nat Page, for instance, in such a case as this, would go home very angry, and secretly resolve to have his revenge,—and when a boy has such a desire, he will always find ways enough to accomplish his purposes. So that if good boys adopt it as a rule, that they will redress their injuries by force, even in those cases where they are stronger than the aggressor, their victory will generally be only for a time, for the bad boy will either seek revenge secretly, or else he will get other bad boys to take his part, and thus the difficulty, instead of being remedied, will only widen and extend.

The third reason is, that if boys generally adopt the principle, that in clear cases, they may fight for their rights, they may *resolve* to do it calmly and without passion, but in fact they will not succeed. There would not be one case in ten thousand like William Lane's. The angry passions would rise, and hatred, malice and revenge would reign in the hearts of both the combatants. These feelings are very wicked, and a boy who hates sin, and is very desirous of

avoiding everything displeasing to God, would not expose himself to such strong temptation to indulge in them, for the handsomest gray squirrel that ever nibbled a nut.

What shall we do then, you will ask, in such cases. Seek redress of your wrongs by appealing to the father of the boy who is guilty of injustice, or tell the story to the other boys, until he feels that public opinion is against him; or withdraw from him as a playmate. By these, and other peaceable means you will generally succeed; and where you cannot, you must bear your injuries patiently, considering them just as men do, the inevitable disappointments and calamities of life. We cannot on any plan, escape them entirely, but the peaceful modes will afford, in the end, the most efficient protection.

Henry and his companions took the squirrel and returned home highly pleased with their success, and rejoicing still more that they had been so fortunate as to discover Nat when in the very act of carrying it off. The striped squirrel, which Henry

had first taken, he gave to James, whose trap had been destroyed; and the wooden box which it had occupied he used as a home for the more beautiful gray, until his father could obtain the revolving wire cage which he had promised him. It was to be made in a neighboring town, and the man had promised to send it as soon as it was done. Henry was all impatience till it came; and every noon and every evening, as he saw a baggage wagon moving slowly over the distant hill, he hastened away, with a step as light as joy, to meet it, eyeing, as he approached, every part of the baggage, to see if there was aught resembling a squirrel cage; and often, very often, did he return disappointed, and complain to his father and his mother, of the delay of the lazy mechanic. In the mean time, the rest of the boys engaged, with new hopes, in their effort upon the squirrel ground, and often did they return from the woods, bearing with them some trembling squirrel, which was given to one of the smaller boys who had as yet taken none.

A fortnight passed away, and Henry's cage did not come, and never did boy seem more sad than he. All the others engaged in their sports with their usual vivacity, and morning, noon and evening, were spent in joy; but Henry's heart had for a long time been set upon a gray squirrel running at full speed in a revolving cage, and now that he had obtained so nearly, the object of his wishes, he could not rest easy till they were fully satisfied. At length, after three weeks, the cage came. One evening about dusk, the boys were all together in the back yard playing "I spy," when a baggage wagon stopped in front of the house. They were so eagerly engaged in their sport, that they knew nothing of it, till Henry exclaimed—"There is my cage," and darted from among them, at full speed, through the gate to the wagon. A beautiful cage it was, and Henry was delighted when they handed it carefully down to his arms. He carried it round to the shed, accompanied by his companions, who rejoiced with him. After they had looked it over and over many times, and had admired every thing that was

admirable about it, till they were fully satisfied of its beauty and excellence, they prepared to remove the squirrel from his wooden box to his new and handsomer home. Henry's sister asked if he had not better wait till morning, for then, said she, it will be much lighter and you can do it with more safety. The boys thought there would be no danger, and went into a little back porch where they thought they could remove the squirrel safely. They shut all the doors closely, and Henry and William alone did the work, while the rest of the boys stood round them in a circle, looking on. They took the squirrel from the box with little difficulty; but when they attempted to put him in the cage, he bit Henry's hand sharply, and struggling and scratching, squeezed out and escaped. At first they were alarmed, and thought they should lose him, but when they considered that the room was tight, their fear subsided, and all were active in trying to catch him. For several moments the squirrel passed rapidly round the porch with a beating heart, but found no way of escape, and

the boys began to feel confident that they should at length take him; when, climbing to the upper part of the window, he found one pane broken, through which he escaped into the night air. The boys immediately rushed to the door, and looked eagerly around in every direction, but no squirrel was to be seen. They were all very sad, and Henry would have cried, but he was ashamed to appear so boyish. They spent half an hour in looking for the squirrel, but being unable to find it, they went home one after another, leaving Henry to think of his loss alone. His mother endeavored to console him with the hope of finding it in the morning, but he had little expectation of that, and went to bed with a disappointed heart, cheering himself, however, with the hope of catching another in his trap, which he determined to set the next day.

In the morning, Henry and one of his companions went to the store on an errand for his mother, and as they passed the common they heard the voices of many boys, as though they were in eager pursuit of something; and looking round, they beheld the

squirrel running at full speed toward the old oak tree, and a troop of boys, headed by Nat Page, in full pursuit of it. The squirrel climbed the tree, and for a short time found shelter among its highest branches; but by clubs and stones the boys soon found means to dislodge it; it descended, and retracing its steps a short distance across the common, suddenly turned short about, and ran toward the oak again; but instead of climbing it as before, it jumped through the fence which was close by, into a corn-field, through which it ran, and was lost to the eyes of all but Nat; he leaped the fence as quick as the squirrel, and kept close at its heels, and often attempted to seize it; but it was in vain, for the nimble squirrel continually eluded his grasp, until it was climbing through the fence at the other side of the field, when he seized it by the tail and held on. The poor squirrel was again a captive, and Nat bore it in his arms toward the common, where the boys surrounded him, and accompanied him as he carried it home.

When Henry saw Nat coming through the corn with the little gray in his arms, he was very much pleased, and ran up to him with a smiling countenance, expressing his joy that he had caught the squirrel; he thanked him for his kindness, and began to smooth the soft gray fur, and to tell the boys of the beautiful cage which he had, just as though the squirrel was still his own, and would be given up to him. But Nat had no idea of such a thing; he looked him sharply in the face and said—

“Why, Henry, you talk as though the squirrel was yours; but you are mistaken; it’s no such thing.”

“Yes it is mine; it got away from me last night as I was putting it into its cage.”

“That may be; and it was yours then; but it is not now, and never will be.”

“I will have it, too; I’ll leave it to the company if I ought not.”

“Leave it to the company! and I care nothing for what they say,—it is none of their business; so be still. Why here, boy, look here;—I see a squirrel running wild through the woods and catch it,—is it not

mine? Well, suppose now I see it running through a corn-field, and catch it,—I want to know if it is not mine then? The squirrel was yours before it escaped, but after that, you had no more to do with it than any other boy.”

“Yes I had, a great deal,” said Henry. “Suppose a man’s horse gets out of his barn and runs away; I want to know if anybody may keep it that catches it?”

“No, indeed; but that’s a different case altogether, any boy can see.”

“The case is different, I know, but the principle is the same.”

“I don’t care about your principles; the cases are altogether different,—one is a horse and the other is a squirrel.”

Most of the company took the side of Henry, and thought that duty required Nat to give him the squirrel; for they said it was nothing more than an act of kindness which was required of all, that they should restore to others what had been lost or had escaped from them. But notwithstanding all they said, Nat refused to give it up, and boldly bid defiance to them all; and told

them to keep their distance, saying that they should not have the squirrel,—that he did not care whom it belonged to,—that he had caught it, and meant to keep it. By this time Nat came to the lane that led to the house where he lived, down which he turned, leaving the boys at the head of it, talking together about his injustice, and planning some way by which they might get the squirrel again and give it to its owner.

While they were talking, one of the party saw William Lane at a distance, coming down the street; to him they all ran, and told the whole story of Nat's conduct. Now William Lane, who has been mentioned before, was in general an excellent boy. He read his bible daily, that he might learn from it his duty, and he was desirous of doing his duty. He tried to do what he thought was right, though he sometimes did wrong; and in all such cases his conscience reproved him for his guilt, and he never found peace till he went to God and heartily and humbly confessed that he had done

wrong, and resolved that he would do so no more, and asked forgiveness.

As William was sorry when he had done wrong himself, so it grieved him when he saw a wicked disposition in others. He wished that all the boys would do what their consciences told them was right; and in all their disputes and quarrels, he was ever found on the side of justice. In consequence of this his character, the smaller boys always went to him in their troubles for protection against the injustice of others; therefore it was that the boys ran to him this morning,—they knew that he would espouse the right side—and that he was a brave boy, and not afraid to do what he thought was his duty in the case.

When William heard their story he manifested great indignation at Nat's conduct, and expressed his determination to take the squirrel from him by some means, though he did not know exactly how. Several of the boys urged him to go down there immediately, and give Nat a good whipping, and take the squirrel. Others thought it would be best to wait till some time when

he was away, for then they could get it before he knew it, without any difficulty; and as to whipping him for his conduct, they thought it would be best to do that also when they could catch him alone, for they rather feared his father, lest he should take the part of his son and whip them all. William disliked the last plan; for, said he, "it is too much like stealing, to go down there secretly and skulk away with it in that style. I prefer to go openly, and see him, and tell him that we claim it as *justly* ours, and *compel* him to give it up; then, when he sees that we have strength and boldness enough to master him and defend ourselves, he will be quiet for his own good, and trouble us no more hereafter. And if we are *not* strong enough to take it from him, we will go without it; a squirrel is no great thing, after all; there are many more in the woods."

"In the woods, yes! but of what use are they to us;—we want them in our traps: here we have been trying for six weeks, and have taken only one gray one, and that Nat Page should run off with it in this way, is not at all fair."

“ I know that, Henry—but what can you do ? If you steal it from him to-night, he will steal it from you to-morrow night. The best way is, to let him know as soon as we can, that we are the strongest party, and that we are determined to prevent such conduct, and thus by fear will we restrain his ugliness ; and if we are not strong enough to restrain him, there is no use in contending with him. But it is school-time now, and let us go, and to-night we will do something about it.”

“ Oh, never mind the school ; let us go down there now and attend to the business, and then it will be done ; come, William—why can’t you ?”

“ Because I ought to go to school.”

Several of the boys tried to persuade him to neglect his studies, but he felt that it would be wrong to do so ; and notwithstanding their entreaties he mildly but firmly refused, and persuaded them all to accompany him to school. During the recess and at noon, Henry’s squirrel and the means of regaining it, were the subject of conversation ; and before evening came, the plan of

procedure was all formed. According to their plan, after tea in the evening, all those who felt interested in the case were to meet at the old oak on the common, and with William at their head, were to march down to Mr. Page's, find Nat, and have a plain talk with him. If he was willing to give up the squirrel peaceably, they would take it and go away, doing nothing more about it; but if he refused to do this, they were determined to take it from him by force. Every boy appeared at the appointed place in good season, and all were soon on their march towards Nat's house—a motley and an excited group. One boy had a cord in his pocket, for he thought it might be of use in binding Nat; another had a long tough switch in his hand, for he thought it would be an excellent thing to make his back tingle. All were talking with a great deal of animation,—each one being delighted with the plan, and confident of success. But the high hopes, which most of the party had formed, were quickly prostrated; for as they approached Nat's house, they saw him with four other stout boys, standing before the

shed door; each of them had a tough stick in his hand, and stood in a posture of defiance, eyeing the little party as they approached, with contemptuous and angry looks. The boys were surprised at this, for they supposed that Nat knew nothing of their plan; but the case was, that he had heard of their intention, and in order to defend himself, had engaged each of these boys to take his part by offering him a share of the squirrel.

This sight might have taught the boys how unwise was their plan. There are very few villages where the bad boys would not conquer the good, in any quarrel which should draw out both sides, and thus the same reasons which render it unwise and wrong for one good boy to use violence against one bad one, applies equally to many. By coming, therefore, in such a way, these boys exposed themselves to great temptation and danger, though the unpleasant results which might have been anticipated were prevented by an unexpected circumstance, as we shall presently see.

When William Lane saw the preparations which had thus been made for defence, he was at a loss what to do ; for though he was stronger than either of those boys, single-handed, and though he doubted not that his party would be victorious in the end, still the boys who were with him were so much smaller than the others, that he knew they would get many hard blows before the matter was over, and would suffer much ; moreover, the idea of getting twelve or fifteen boys into a fight which would arouse all their angry feelings, and lead to the most furious violence, was one which, now that he began to see it near, looked very alarming to him. He thought it would be better far to go without a squirrel all his days, than be the means of exciting so much passion as would arise on such an occasion. As he stopped his party for a moment, to tell them his feelings about the matter, Nat and those with him burst into a loud laugh, for they supposed they had stopped through fear. Soon William proceeded, followed by the others as before. He marched with his usual easy step, neither excited with indig-

nation nor trembling with fear ; and with a good deal of self-possession he passed fearlessly by the four boys till he came to Nat, and in a firm tone said to him—

“ Nat, I suppose you know what I want ? ”

“ Yes ; and I know that you won’t get it,” said he, angrily ; and his party braced themselves up in defiance.

“ Why, Nat, is the squirrel yours ? ”

“ That is none of your business ; you have come down here to take it away, and now I wish to see you do it.”

“ Yes, I wish to see you do it, *if you can*,” said the next boy, thrusting his fist before William’s face.

William colored deeply at this insult ; his heart throbbed with indignation, and angry passions began to rise ; and ere he was aware of it, he was about to strike him. He had brought himself into circumstances of great temptation, but his habitual sense of duty restrained him. He remembered that God commanded all his creatures to love one another, and he curbed his anger ; still his feelings were tumultuous, and in a firm and confident tone, but with an excited eye, he said,

“Jack, do n’t you put your fist in my face again. I know that we have come down here to take away the squirrel,—and you think that we cannot do it; as though twelve of us cannot master you five. You saw us stop, and thought it was through fear; and now you are beginning your bullying threats, as though you would terrify us from our attempt. But you were never more mistaken; I can whip two of you myself, and I know that the other eleven can master the three;—so just stop this, quick. I do not wish to fight, I am sure,—and I hope that we shall not;—but do you think that we shall suffer Nat Page to act in this manner? He has no more right to this squirrel than he has to Mr. Sawyer’s monkey—not a whit. Two months ago that monkey got loose and ran away. Nat caught it, and gave it to Mr. Sawyer again. Now why did n’t he keep it, I wish to know? According to your reasoning it was his, because he caught it. Now why did n’t he keep it? Suppose your rabbit should get away, and I should catch it; would you say it was mine? Well, now Henry has had

this squirrel more than three weeks—and last night”——

“I do n’t care about your monkeys and your rabbits; Nat caught the squirrel, and he has a right to it, and shall have it.”

“No, he shall not have it;” said many voices in a loud, angry tone.

“We will see who shall have it,” was replied on the other side, and William feared that they would soon engage in hot and angry strife. While he was regretting the turn that matters had taken, a loud gruff voice was heard above all the others, calling out,

“Have what? what are you talking about? you make noise enough here to stun a man out of house and home. I say, boys, *what do you want?*”

They were all whist in an instant; and looking round, saw Nat’s father, who had just come home from his day’s work. Now Mr. Page was about forty years old,—an honest, good natured man, governed a good deal by the feelings of the moment; he was also rough and coarse in his manners, which was apparent both in his acts of kindness and unkindness.

Had you seen him punish his children, you would think that he was a very brutal man ; and so perhaps he was sometimes. But this arose from the excess of his honest indignation against an individual when he did wrong, or rather when he did what was *shameful* ; for he had little regard to conscience. When William and his party saw Mr. Page, they were rather alarmed ; for they knew not which side he would take ;—whether he would espouse the cause of his son, or the cause of justice ; but William, remembering that he was then at work for his father, and had been engaged in his service for a month, took courage, thinking that this fact would secure him a favorable hearing, and told him plainly all the circumstances of the case. He had hardly finished his story, when Mr. Page interrupted him :

“And is this what you are making all this fuss about ? Why, Nat, come here ; there—take that,” said he, giving him a cuff upon the ear, that sent him staggering toward the shed. “Now do you bring that squirrel, and give it to Henry in an instant ; and let me never hear of your acting so again ; if

you do, you will rue it. And now where is Jack?" He looked for him; but he and the other three had fled.

Nat, with shame, mortification and anger, brought forth the squirrel and gave it to Henry, who, with his friends, bore it home in triumph. The next morning the boys assembled and put it safely in its cage, and all that day they enjoyed its safe possession. They were delighted as they saw it nimbly bound from side to side, while the cage was set in such rapid motion that they could hardly see the wires of which it was made.

But Henry's joy was not to last long. When Nat brought out the squirrel, to give it to him, he scowled fiercely in his face, and in a whispering tone muttered, that he would soon have his revenge. Henry remembered this, and his joy was mingled with fear, lest some evil should befall the squirrel through the instrumentality of Nat; and his fears were soon realized. The second morning after he had obtained the squirrel, he went to the cage, but the squirrel was not there; he walked from the porch

into the shed, and saw it stretched at full length upon a log, with its head severed from its body by the bloody axe.

The story is ended ; and the moral of it is this,—that a resort to harshness and violence, even when the cause is good, and when accompanied with much moderation of forbearance, is not the way to obtain the sure and permanent redress of injuries.

## CHAPTER III.

## THE POPLAR WHISTLE.

ONE day, I was walking across the common in Haverdale, and when I came to the old oak which is at the farther corner of it, I found that about a dozen boys had assembled for play, as usual; but as it was now midsummer, and at the hottest part of the day, they felt too languid for active sport, and were therefore sitting upon the ground in the shade of the tree. They were variously employed. Some of them were digging in the earth—some were pinning oak leaves together—some were “whittling”—and others were stretched at full length upon the grass, listening to a story from one of their number.

As I approached, I saw Samuel Davis had a long poplar switch under his arm, and that he was making a whistle at one end of it. Joseph Brown sat a little behind him, and from mere sport began to twitch the

other end, in order to joggle him, and thus amuse himself by teasing Samuel.

Now Samuel was a quick-tempered boy, and could not bear a great deal of such sport; and while I was passing, I heard him say rather impatiently,

“Be still, Joseph,—quit.” And when I had gone by the tree and turned round the corner of the fence into the street, so that the cornfield was between us, I heard him exclaim very angrily,

“Blast your eyes,\* Joseph—there, take that;” and at the same time I heard the sound of a blow. Before I could turn to see how the matter would terminate, I heard Joseph exclaim still more passionately,

“By Gorry, \* Sam, do you think I’ll bear that?” and at the same moment the rest of the boys burst into a hearty laugh, encour-

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\* Some of my readers may be surprised that I should repeat such improper language, even if the boys did use it. And I should not do it, were it not that I wish them all to understand the remarks which I afterwards made to the boys, on the subject.

aging the two combatants to fight. They jumped from the ground, exclaiming,

“Hurra, here’s a fight,—make a ring;—give it to him, Joe;—give it to him, Sam:” and in a moment they stood encircling the two boys, ridiculing cowardice, and urging them on to dare and provoke one another’s anger, and deal forth the blows of passion and revenge. The two boys were both hasty, passionate little fellows, and not at all backward in the affair; so that ere five minutes had passed, the blood was running from the nose of one, while the other was screaming piteously because of his “*bunged eye*,” as the boys termed it. I was grieved at such a sight, and walked hastily back, that I might soothe their angry feelings and restore peace, if possible. But before I reached the spot, the contest was all over. Samuel was binding his handkerchief over his eye,—Joseph was wiping his bloody nose,—while the other boys stood round, laughing and joking at the whole matter.

As I approached, the boys stopped their conversation, put their hands into their pockets, looked down upon the ground, and

stepped about in a lounging manner, kicking the chips at their feet. They were all embarrassed, for they perceived that I had noticed the affair, and had come back to talk with them about it.

"Well, boys, you have had quite a contest," said I "did you learn who was the bravest?"

As I said this, the boys began to look up and smile; and one of the older ones said in a laughing manner,

"They are both the bravest,—for each has flogged the other."

"So it seems," said I; "both are vanquished, but it is difficult to tell who is victor. But how do you like such sport, boys?"

"There is not much sport in this;" muttered Joseph, angrily; "and I'll pay Sam for it, the next time I catch him. I would do it now, if my nose did not bleed so."

"It is good enough for you," said Samuel; "you ought not to plague me, when I am making a whistle; and I will serve you in the same manner every time you do."

"Oh Samuel," said I, "do not talk so,—do not give way to your feelings in this

manner. I think that Joseph has done wrong,—I think that he is to be blamed ;—but I think that you have done wrong also. He was merely in sport in what he did, and you ought not to have been so quick in”——

“That is just like Samuel”——interrupted Joseph. “He is always as quick as a flash ; I never saw so quick-tempered a fellow in my life ;—he is as hot as a coal of fire.”

“And you are an ugly plague—always vexing”——

“No, no, boys !—stop”——interrupted I ;—“you ought not to talk in this manner ; hear what I have to say. Let me see,—how many are there here, Daniel ?” said I to one of the largest boys.

“There are thirteen, Sir.”

“Well, I will tell you what we will do. I think that these two boys have done wrong. Now we will have a kind of court, and try them, and see how it is. They shall stand up there by the fence, and be prisoners at the bar, as lawyers say. They must not interrupt us at all, but must keep silence. The other eleven of you may be the jurors,

and I will state the case to you in all its particulars; and then you must decide whether they have done wrong or not."

They all seemed pleased with the plan, and took their places accordingly. Then, said I,—

"Perhaps some of you will think that these boys did right to fight, but will be unwilling to say so because I am here. I do not wish it to be so; I want every one to speak out his opinion clearly and boldly, whatever it may be. It is true that I shall be glad if I find that you all think right about it; but if you think wrong, I wish to know it. But whether you think wrong, or feel wrong, do not conceal it; but let us all know plainly how you regard the matter. And in forming your judgment, I wish that each boy would think of the case himself, and not ask the one who is next him;—let every one decide according to the dictates of his own conscience. Do you know what conscience is, Daniel?"

"Conscience? yes, Sir. Conscience is—it is—that—within—conscience? why everybody has a conscience."

“ Oh yes, every one has a conscience; but that is not telling what it is.”

“ Well, conscience,—why it is,—why I do not know;—I cannot explain it, but I know what it is, well enough.”

“ It is hard to define it, I think; and I do not know that I can do it; but I will endeavor to explain it, that you may all understand what it means. I will say first, that it is a power, which God has implanted in all of us, of perceiving that some actions are right and that others are wrong. For instance—suppose you see a kind, good natured boy walking along the street, whistling carelessly as he goes,—and that another boy, with a large stick in his hand, runs slyly behind him, and without any provocation, strikes him violently over the arm so that he breaks the bone;—does that boy do right? ”

“ No ! ” exclaimed they all.

“ Why did 'nt he ? ”

“ Because he ought not to injure the boy, if he had never provoked him.”

“ How do you know that he ought not? ”

“ Know ?—know ?—why—I know easy enough ; something within tells me so.”

“ Well, that something within which tells you that it was wrong, is conscience ; and God has given a conscience to all men. So he has to every boy.

“ But we will try another case. Suppose that one of you were sick, and that the boys were to have a game of foot-ball on the common, in the afternoon ; your brother wishes to go and play, but instead of that he remains at home, to keep company with you, and amuse you, because you are sick. Would that be right ? ”

“ Yes, Sir,” said they all.

“ Suppose that a boy should help his friend weed a carrot-bed,—would it be right ? ”

“ Yes, Sir.”

“ Suppose this same boy should ask his friend to help him gather some apples, and he should refuse to do it—would it be right ? ”

“ No, Sir.”

“ How do you know ? ”

The boys hesitated.

“The principle within, which tells you that one act is right and that another one is wrong, is conscience. And God has given this conscience to every one, to young and old. One winter’s day I said to a little girl about eight years old, ‘Suppose you should see a boy walking along in the road, and another one come softly behind him and push him into a snow-drift close by,—would he do right?’ She said that she did not know. ‘Suppose he did it because he was angry,’ said I, ‘Oh, why then it would be wrong,’ said she. ‘Well, suppose he did it in fun.’ ‘Why, then it would be right,’ said she. You see that she had a conscience, and could tell what was right and what was wrong. So it is with all of you; God has given to you all a conscience, by which you can judge what is right and what is wrong. Now in the case of these two boys, you must consider the subject candidly, and let your conscience decide. And I will say here, that it is very wicked for boys ever to do what their conscience forbids; this conscience is, as it were, the voice of God speaking to us, by which he makes known to us

our duty; and he who disobeys conscience in any way, either by doing what his own thoughts tell him is wrong, or by refusing to do what they tell him is right, sins against God, and incurs his displeasure. I therefore advise you all to take heed to conscience, and obey it. But to come to the case in hand;—Samuel and Joseph have been fighting,—now is it right for boys to fight? ”

“ No, Sir ; No, Sir,”—said several of the boys, while as many said, “ Yes, Sir ; Yes Sir.”

“ You seem to be divided in opinion ; why do you think it is right, Andrew ? ”

“ I think that if one boy plagues another, it is perfectly right for him to defend himself.”

“ It may seem so to you ; but do you think that God likes to see it ? You know the character of God ;—you know that he is good, and likes to see his creatures happy. You know this from what he is constantly doing around us,—you see him continually taking care of his creatures,—he provides for your wants and my wants,—he provides

for the beasts, for the birds, and for the fishes,—he feeds them all. Besides this you know what he has said in the bible in regard to our loving one another. Considering all this, do you think it is pleasant to him to see his creatures fight?”

“No, I suppose not;—but what shall a boy do, when another one plagues him? shall he stand and take it?”

“No matter about that now; but you think that God is displeased when boys fight,—do you?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“And that therefore it is wrong?”

“Yes, Sir.”

“Then either Samuel or Joseph, or both of them, have done wrong this noon, for they have been fighting?”

“Yes, Sir; I suppose so,”—said all the boys.

“So I think. And now we will see who is to be blamed. Samuel was making a whistle, and Joseph began to amuse himself by joggling him; now is it right for a boy to please himself by teasing others? Do you think, that when God made us, he

designed that we should thus amuse ourselves at the expense of others?—or did he rather intend that we should do all we could to make others happy? What does the bible say, Daniel?”

“If a boy does it in fun, I do not see any harm in it. The greatest sport I have is to plague the little ones,” said he, laughing.

“Well, now consider that a little. God has made you all, and requires you to love one another; but your happiness consists in teasing the weak and defenceless. It is true that you are yourself in sport all the time, and feel kindly toward them; but they do not enjoy it any more for that. You trouble them still,—you vex them, and make them unhappy; now can this be right? I appeal to you all.”

The boys said that it did not seem exactly right; and yet they could not think it was *very* wrong.

“Then in regard to Joseph’s case, when he teased Samuel so, you do not think that he did exactly right?”

“No, Sir.”

“You think just as I do; and now we will consider Samuel’s case. Was it right for him to be so fretful and passionate as he was, and strike Joseph in the face? You know what God tells us, in regard to suffering patiently the injustice of others; now Joseph did this in sport, but suppose he did it from mere *malignity*;—ought Samuel then to give way to such angry feelings, and strike him? What do you think about it Daniel?”

“Considering that he did it in *sport*, I think that Samuel was wrong; but if he had done it from ugliness, he would have done just right to whip him.”

“So I think,” said half the boys, while the rest knew not what to think of the subject.

“You think, then, that if there is a bad boy among you, who is inclined to trouble the others from ugliness——

“But I did n’t do it from ugliness,”—interrupted Joseph; I’ll leave it to the boys if I did.”

“Yes you did. You did it on purpose to plague me, they all know,”—said Samuel.

"No, no—you must not speak, boys; you must be silent," said I. "If, then, one of the boys plagued the others from a bad disposition, you think it right to whip him, do you?"

"If he should plague *me*, I would whip him, if I could," said Andrew, while several others assented to the same answer; but one of the boys said,

"I think that we ought to whip him; but we should do it without revenge; and if we thought that he would trouble us no more, we ought not to whip him at all."

"Do you think, then, that it would be safe and wise, as a general arrangement, for boys to punish one another when they do wrong maliciously, only having them cautioned to do it in a calm and dispassionate manner?"

The boys looked at one another and smiled.

"Well," said I, seeing that they hesitated, "we will not discuss that now, since this is evidently a different case; for the wrong done here was not malicious. You admit Joseph was only in fun, and that Samuel turned round, and in a hasty, passionate

manner, struck him in the face. Do you think he did right?"

"No, Sir,"—said most of them.

"Now I wish to try another case. You have decided that Samuel and Joseph have both done wrong, and I wish that you would decide now upon your own conduct, and consider whether *that* has been right or not. The two boys were fighting; you immediately jumped from the ground and began to laugh and joke, and encourage them on in their acts of wickedness. Not a single one dissuaded them from their anger, but you did all you could to inflame it. You all seemed to enjoy it as fine sport. Was it right? What does conscience say to that?"

The boys hesitated; they looked upon the ground, and scarcely made an answer. One or two said they did not know, and the others made no reply; but I believe their own thoughts condemned them, and that they were unwilling to confess it.

"What do *you* think about it, Daniel?"

"I do not know, Sir," said he, reluctantly,

in a half smiling manner ; “ I do not suppose it was exactly right.”

“ I do not wish any of you to answer if you are unwilling to ; but I wish you would all think of it, and decide for yourselves whether it was right,—and whether it is right in *anything* for one boy to encourage another in doing what is wrong. If you think of it fairly, I believe that your conscience will say that you have done wrong, and that it is *always* wrong to do so ; that is the testimony of my conscience.

“ Well, now we have got through the case, and the result of it is this. You think that Joseph did wrong by teasing Samuel,—that Samuel did wrong by being angry,—and that they both did wrong by fighting,—and I am inclined to believe that you think you have done wrong by encouraging them in it, though you do not like to confess it.” As I said this, they all smiled.

“ I have nothing more to say,” continued I ; “ only I hope that hereafter you will often consider your actions, and think whether they are right or not ; for if you do not, you

may very often do things which are wrong when you do not know it."

The little party then began to separate and go home; and when they were all dispersed over the common in their various ways, I thought of something else which I wished to say, and regretted that it did not come to mind before.

It was this. When I passed the boys, as the quarrel was commencing, I heard Samuel use this expression—"*Blast your eyes,*" and a moment after, Joseph said—"*By Gorry.*" I wished to talk with the boys about that, for I think they ought not to use such language. I believe it is wrong, and that those who accustom themselves to its use, will gradually be led on to worse expressions, till, ere they are aware of it, they fall into habits of the most open profaneness. I therefore advise every boy who is guilty of using such expressions, to drop them at once; for there is great danger of their becoming very wicked in their speech, if they do not.

## CHAPTER IV.

## PETER A-FISHING.

MR. WATSON, Peter's father, lived in the upper part of the village, in a small house upon the banks of the river. He was a pious shoe-maker, who believed that the bible came from God, and endeavored to obey it, both in external action and in the feelings of his heart. He was a very industrious man, working with diligence at his trade, and looking to God to bless him in his efforts to provide for his family. Mrs. Watson, and the children also, (for Peter had a younger brother and a sister older than himself) did all they could to promote one another's welfare; consequently everything about them had the appearance and reality of comfort. The house indeed was a small one-story building, and unpainted, but everything was perfectly neat; the clapboards and shingles were firm, the doors hung evenly, and the window-sashes were close. In front of the

house was a good sized yard, covered with thick grass, in the corners of which were several lilac bushes; roses were blooming beneath the windows, and upon the large stone step were several flower pots—which Peter's sister had under her charge. I remember also, that there was a beautiful vine which grew up one side of the door, ran along the top, and spread over the roof. There were no trees in the front yard, but a large elm was seen shooting up from behind the house; and I always fancied that Peter had a beautiful swing suspended from its branches, that he and his sister and brother might there amuse themselves in its shade; and so indeed it was—for I once called there to see Mr. Watson, and as I opened the gate, I found Peter in the front yard pruning the rose-bushes with a shoe-knife.

“Good evening, Peter,” said I; “where is your father?”

“How do you do, Sir,” he replied; “my father is in the garden; will you walk out and see him?”

"If you please," I said; and we went through the house. As soon as I reached the back entry, I espied his brother, as I expected, swinging to and fro beneath the elm. It was a large tree, its branches spreading widely around in every direction, forming, as it were, a huge umbrella, and thus sheltering the well, and the grass plot, and everything immediately behind the house, from the rays of the noon-day sun. I went to the garden, where I did my business with Mr. Watson, whom I found hoeing potatoes, and I then returned home, pleased with all that I had seen.

Mr. Watson sent his children to the Sabbath school; and the instructions which Peter there received did him much good, for the more he thought of them, the more he was convinced that the bible came from God, and that that was almost the only means we had of knowing his will. He knew that no one could see God, because he is a spirit, but then he believed there was a God, and that the bible was like a letter sent from him to us, which all ought to read, believe its contents, and obey.

Therefore he studied it often, and prayed that he might understand it. Among other things that he thought upon, was the spirit of love and forgiveness which Christ said all ought to exercise toward one another. It seemed rather strange at first that a boy ought to love his enemies. He had been accustomed to think that when a boy had struck him, it was perfectly right to strike him in return ; and he had always done so. But when he read the bible, he saw that it was wrong ; and when he thought of the Saviour's rule, he saw its excellence, and loved it. After that he was more kind and forgiving in his disposition than he had been before ; so that when the boys did him any kind of injustice, instead of retaliating upon them with vengeance, he sought to win their affection by kindness.

It happened one day that Peter's mother was sick, and he went to the apothecary's for medicine. On his way, he saw a play-mate, who went with him. And as they entered the shop, the first thing that attracted their attention was a large glass globe upon the counter, filled with water, in

which were four gold-fishes swimming playfully about.

"I wish we could obtain money enough to buy them," said Peter's companion as they came out of the shop. "Let us think of the matter, and perhaps we can devise some plan by which we may do it."

"I wish so, really," said Peter, "for I should be right glad if I owned them; they are beautiful things,—are n't they?"

"Yes," said James, for that was the boy's name. "Do you know where they get them?"

"No, I do not; but I presume we could learn if we had some books."

"What kind of books?"

"Let me think—I do n't know, I am sure; but ask your father, he can tell, for he is a lawyer, and ought to know. Ask him what kind of a book will tell us about gold-fishes, and if he owns it. Perhaps he has got the very book we want; and perhaps he can tell you himself all about them; will you ask him?"

"Yes, I will ask him to-day at the dinner table;—but how shall we contrive to buy them?"

“We can buy them together perhaps, and keep them half the time at your house, and half the time at ours. How much did he say they were worth?”

“The globe and all he said were worth two dollars.”

“Well, that will be a dollar apiece, and I have seventy-five cents already, which I have been saving to buy Robinson Crusoe with; and I know that I can earn twenty-five cents in some way during the week; and that will make out my dollar. Now how much money have you got?”

“I have not a cent. I spent all of mine last Fourth of July. I wish I had kept it till now.”

“Then we cannot buy them unless your father will give you more. You can ask him, this noon, and perhaps he will be willing to buy them for you.”

James walked slowly away towards home, intending to ask his father, though he had little hope of success; for he remembered that he had advised him to spend only a part of his money, and to keep the rest for some future occasion. When he

had walked some distance on his way, Peter turned round, and called out to him to come down to their house after dinner, and tell him what his father said.

After dinner, Peter went into the back yard, and found James swinging to and fro in the shade, beneath the elm. He appeared rather out of humor, and the first words he spoke, were,

“Peter, father says he won’t buy them for me. I should think he might, I am sure.”

“Did he tell you where the fishes came from?”

“No, I did n’t ask him.”

Peter saw how it was with James, and spoke to him plainly, saying,

“You ought not to be angry, James, I am sure. Your father knows best what to do, and you ought to submit to his will.”

“Why in the world can’t he buy them?—they cost only a dollar. There is no reason at all. He can do it as well as not, only he won’t.”

“Whether he can or not, or what his reasons are, is not for you to consider. It

is our duty to obey our parents. We receive everything from them,—we are dependent upon them for our support, and we ought in all things to submit to their will. But what is the use of being so sad. We can have fishes without those, though they will not be so beautiful; we can go up to the brook and catch some small trouts, which we can bring down and put in the trough there, and they will amuse us almost as much as gold-fishes.”

“Oh, well, let us go this afternoon, for there is no school.”

“I should like to, much; but I cannot, for my mother is sick, and I ought to stay at home; for I may be wanted.”

“Oh, no—there are Sarah and your brother George; they can do all that is necessary, I know.”

Notwithstanding James’s remark, Peter thought he ought to remain at home; and they concluded that they would go the first good opportunity they had.

The next Wednesday they set off with four other boys, each one having his rod and line in hand, and a small tin or wooden

box filled with angling-worms, as bait. They soon left the public road, and walked for nearly a mile through fields and over hilly pastures, till they came to a brook about ten feet wide, which was winding its way along among the hills. Sometimes it flowed smoothly over a bed of sand,—and then it rippled rapidly among large stones that lay in its course,—and again the deep waters seemed to be tranquilly at rest within some circling bank, which was, in some places, shaded by trees, and beautified with wild flowers; and in others, entirely bare and exposed to the cheering rays of the sun.

Here they baited their hooks, and proceeded up each side of the stream, stopping at each deep and dark hole they found, to drop in their line and see if any fish there could be tempted to bite. The boys rambled on for a long time, catching here and there a trout. Sometimes a large one was drawn from the water, dangling at the end of the line, with beautiful shining scales, which the boy eagerly seized, and strung upon his stick to be eaten; again it was a

small one, a tiny thing that you could hold in a tea-cup. As they were proceeding in this way, they at length found two other boys who were fishing in like manner with themselves. They were from the lower part of the town, and of selfish and passionate disposition; and the first notice they had of their presence was, a loud shout from them, of,

“Keep off there, you fellows, we want none of your company here; this is our ground; we came here first, so keep your distance.”

“Who are you, so bold there?” said Andrew Wilson, who was one of the boys who went with Peter and James.

“Hush, Andrew, you should not talk so, for you will get to fighting soon, if you are not careful,” said Peter.

“I do not care if I do; they are nobody but some of those impudent Lower-streeters, and I can whip any of them easy enough.”

“What do you gain by fighting, Andrew? Suppose you whip them; in that case you only destroy your own peace and theirs; and you know that it is very

wrong. The bible teaches that we ought to love *all* men; and even if any do us great injustice, we ought then to forgive and love them."

"Well, I do n't want to fight, I am sure; but I wish they would hold their tongues."

"I'll make you hold *your tongue* very quick, if you do n't cease your jabber," shouted one of the boys from up the stream.

"I should like to see you do it," said Andrew.

"Why do you reply so, Andrew?" said Peter. "I do think it is wrong, for you know that such answers only irritate them, and provoke them to anger. Now do stop; why can't you? I know you will get to fighting unless you do."

After this, Andrew controlled his feelings, and the party proceeded quietly, fishing as they went, and paying no regard to the bravado of the two boys; for they knew perfectly well, that they had as good a right as any to fish wherever they chose in the brook. The silence, however, was soon broken, for as they approached the boys, they again shouted in an angry tone,

*“Keep [away there;—you sha’n’t come here; if you do, you shall give us all the fishes you catch.”*

Peter thought that if he should expostulate with the boys, it might do some good, and prevent a quarrel; for he saw clearly that they were wrong, and he hoped that by kindly reasoning with them, he might set them right. He therefore said,

“Why should we give you our fishes? is n’t the brook free, and open to all; and has n’t one boy as much right to fish here as another? The fact that you came here first does not give you any right to drive us away.”

“I care not for your rights; I came here first, and you ought not to interfere with me; and if you catch any fish, I shall take them away from you,—that’s clear; so keep your distance, and mind your own business.”

“What boasting cock-turkeys you are,” said Andrew, “strutting about there, as though all were subject to your will; do you think that we are to be driven off the ground by you?”

“Cock-turkeys or not, you will learn that we can defend our rights.”

“I hope you can, and I am willing that you should; but you will not take more than belongs to you; I can assure you of that.”

Peter was rather grieved at the replies of Andrew; for he perceived that they tended to anger and strife, and he stood by seeking for an opportunity to utter words that would soothe and pacify. He said to the two boys,

“You say that you will defend your rights; do you think that you have a right to drive us from the brook?”

“I think when two boys start early in the day, and get a good place to fish, that no others ought to come near them to trouble them. I think they have a right to the place, because they came there first.”

“I do not; I think you are mistaken; none of the boys own the brook, and it is, therefore, to us common property; and we all have a right to fish wherever we please.”

“Well, I care not if you have; you shan’t—that is certain.”

Notwithstanding the threats of the two boys, the other party continued to fish nearer and nearer to them, till at last they dropped their lines in the same wide basin of deep, smooth water in which they were fishing. The winding bank was covered with thick grass, and the place was partially shaded with trees, so that the water was dark. It was an excellent spot, and amply large for them all. There was no need of contention, but the two boys were selfish and obstinate; when, therefore, the other party approached so near, they repeated their threats, and asserted with more vehemence than before, and even with oaths, that they would take away every fish they caught.

Andrew replied with equal warmth, that he would fish there in spite of them; and if they touched anything of his, he would knock them both into the brook.

Peter, seeing how much anger was excited, and that a fight would ensue if they remained there, proposed to his companions that they should go further up the stream, saying that though the boys were very un-

just indeed, yet he preferred not to fish at all, rather than fight for it. In his heart, he felt that it would be more pleasing to God, for him to submit to injustice, than to maintain his rights by quarrelling. He therefore took up the stick on which his fishes were strung, and walked on, followed by two of his companions; James and Andrew and the other boy remaining behind; for they thought it cowardly, as they termed it, to be driven off the ground in that manner.

Thus far the boys had caught a very good number of large trouts, though they had as yet taken but two small ones. These two belonged to Peter; but as James, who carried the water-pail in which they were put, was on the opposite bank, he left them with him, supposing that they would be safe. He had been gone, however, but about fifteen minutes, when he heard James call out very loudly and passionately,

“Oh, Peter, Peter, come here, they have thrown your fishes into the water,”—and at the same time many high and angry words, as though they were engaged in a hot contest.

The case was this. Soon after he left, a little trout took hold of Andrew's hook; he pulled it from the water, saw it dangling at the end of the line, and was just swinging it round to the bank, when it jerked itself off, and fell in again. This increased his desire for it; and he dropped his line a second time, with greater eagerness than before. A little trout again took hold, which he pulled safely to the shore, and put into the pail. He and James were stooping down and admiring the little things which were swimming nimbly about, when the largest of the Lower-streeters ran furiously to their side, saying,

"Did n't I tell you I'd take them away if you caught any? There now, take that."

So saying he gave the pail a violent kick, which sent that, fishes and all, into the brook. Andrew did not suffer that very meekly, but rose up with indignation to be avenged on the aggressor. He was ready for action; and they eagerly buckled in contest; and there they were—two boys, whom God commanded to love one another, with faces red with anger, struggling to-

gether in strife, on the bank of the stream. Peter saw them, and, grieved at their wicked conduct, and pitying them, ran to part the combatants ; but just as he reached the spot, by some unlucky trip, they both stumbled and fell headlong into the water. At that place, however, it was not very deep, coming up only to the arm-pits, so that there was no real danger. The Lower-streeter, however, could not swim well, and as he plunged, he became frightened and confused, which gave Andrew a great advantage over him ; for he, being an excellent swimmer, was comparatively calm, and immediately attacked his antagonist, with increased fury ; who, being half strangled and blinded by the water as he fell, could make but little resistance, but stood staggering and choking, and exposed to the unmerciful blows of his enraged enemy.

James saw that Andrew had the mastery, and being filled with anger himself, he stood upon the bank shouting encouragement to him ; urging him on in his vengeful and wicked course by gestures and words, and calling out,

"Give it to him—strike him—thump him—shove him over—strangle him—drown him," and various other expressions of the same kind, which showed the strong passion from which they proceeded.

Peter's feelings were very different. At first, when he heard James cry out that his fishes had been thrown into the water, his heart throbbed with indignation; but remembering God and the truths of the bible, he quickly subdued his emotion; and instead of thinking of his lost fishes, he was rather moved with the thought of the wickedness of the two boys, and of the feelings with which God regarded them. As he stood upon the bank and saw them fight, his heart was moved within him; for his conscience condemned Andrew who had thus given himself up to revenge; and he pitied the boy who was so cruelly belabored by him; while at the same time he grieved for both, that instead of loving one another, they were engaged in violating the command of God. He called to Andrew earnestly to stop, and used every means in his power to end the conflict; but it was in

vain. Andrew, urged on by passion, was deaf to his call; and availing himself of the confusion and exhaustion of the boy, grasped him round the waist, and by an easy effort, overpowered him, so that he sunk down before him into the water. Peter instantly leaped in, and by main force, shoving Andrew away, raised the helpless boy, and led him choking and staggering to the shore, where he seated him upon the green, sunny grass. He soon laid himself down at full length, sore, agitated and exhausted; and Peter stood by his side, endeavoring to soothe his feelings and to make him comfortable.

Andrew, still excited with anger, waded to the opposite side; and as he climbed up the bank, with the water dripping from his clothes, and stood by the side of James, he called out,

“There, my boy, I hope you are satisfied now; and I think you will learn that I am to fish where I please, and that you are not to kick my trouts into the brook, either.”

The Lower-streeter who had been fighting, was too exhausted to make any reply;

but the other boy, his companion, turning to Andrew, said,

“ You think, I presume, that the matter will end here ; but you are much mistaken, I can assure you. We are not the only Lower-streeters, and you need not think that we shall see one of our gang abused in this style for nothing. If you don't rue this bitterly before the week is out, then my name is n't Jack, I can tell you.”

After a little more conversation of this kind, the boys separated and went home ; for they did not feel like fishing any more, after what had happened, but were sad ; and those who had engaged in the fight, and given way to anger, began to feel a mysterious fear. They feared something, but they knew not what. The case was, they were guilty, and that was the reason they were afraid. Andrew, who had gone farther in this wickedness than either of the others, was the most uneasy, and he was the first one who proposed to go home, saying, as he stooped down to take up his trouts,

“Come, let us go home. I do not wish to stay here any longer.”

As he walked slowly away into the woods with his troubled conscience, the rest of the party, one after another, followed him, except Peter, who remained with the Lower-streeters, for he thought they might want some help. It was not, however, necessary; for in half an hour, the boy rose up and set out for home with his companion, while Peter returned through the fields another way. It was after sundown, and beginning to grow dark; everything was calm and peaceful, and as he walked along, he thought of what had passed. As he reviewed the whole affair, and thought of passages of the bible which taught him how God regarded it, he was glad, *very glad* that he had pursued the course that he did. He was glad that he had made efforts at first to persuade Andrew not to fight, for he believed that that was in accordance with the commands of Christ; he believed that Christ would have done so had he been there. He felt conscious, too, that he had done it from a desire to please God, and

promote peace; and he knew that such a disposition of the heart was pleasing to God; he was, therefore, at peace. So also when he left the good fishing-ground and went to the brook above, he was conscious that he had done so to please God; his object was to avoid a fight, which he thought would follow if he remained; for though he fully believed that the Lower-streeters were wrong and unjust, and knew also that he could easily whip them, yet he thought it was in accordance with the spirit of the bible, that he should suffer a manifest injustice, rather than seek redress by contention. He thought that God approved of his conduct, and was therefore at peace.

Everything, however, had not been just right. He remembered the indignation which he felt when he heard that his fishes had been thrown away; and how he felt at first, a *secret* pleasure in seeing Andrew whip the boy so soundly. This he knew was wrong, and that it displeased God and the Saviour; and this troubled him for a few minutes; but as he thought of his conduct, he was grieved at it, and remem-

bering the promise of God in his word, that he will forgive those who are truly penitent, he believed it, he trusted in it, and thus found peace. Moreover, when he remembered the active part he had taken in delivering the boy from the excessive revenge of Andrew,—and that he had, with a spirit of forgiveness, and a sincere desire to help him, remained behind after the others had gone, he thought that the state of his heart was, in some degree, right in the sight of God; that he had, in some degree, that spirit which God looks upon with pleasure; he hoped that God was his friend; and in this hope, founded on the declarations of God, in his word, he found peace; and entered the door of his father's house, a tranquil, peaceful and happy boy.

Peter, I believe, was a christian.

## CHAPTER V.

## FRANK, WHO TURNED COWARD.

AMONG the boys of Haverdale who excited my interest, was Frank Orson, the son of a goldsmith. He was about twelve years old at the time of which I write; and for two or three years previous to this, little had been observed in him more than was common in other boys. He was, it is true, healthy, vigorous, and active; full of mirth, and yet good-natured, so that in all his frolicks, he avoided giving offence. Moreover, he was known to be peaceable, not easily taking offence, and *never* engaging in the quarrels of others. He was, however, always ready to fight in self-defence, when he was manifestly oppressed. For these reasons he was beloved by all his playmates, old and young; but, as there were many other boys of like character, especially in the upper part of the town, I had never felt any especial interest in him

till the summer of his twelfth year, when, as his companions said, "he turned coward."

The first that I heard of this, was one Tuesday evening about five o'clock, as I passed the school-house; for it was often the case, that during my walks about the town, I made my calculation, so that on my return, I might be near that building when the school closed for the day; for I was much amused at the sight of forty or fifty boys rushing from the door, like so many sheep escaping from the fold, and frolicking over the common with light and gladsome hearts. On the Tuesday that I have mentioned, they had been frolicking but a few moments, when some one shouted,

"Oh, there is Dick, let us catch him, and Frank will flog him." At the same instant three of their number started off in full pursuit of a boy, who was seen at a little distance down the street, fleeing from them with all speed. The scholars who remained upon the common, shouted encouragement to their companions, who soon caught the boy, and seizing him by the col-

lar of his jacket, dragged him back with many an unkind thump. As the thrēe with their captive approached the green, Dick began to tremble, and whimper, and spring, with a kind of desperation, from side to side, hoping that he might jerk from them and escape; for he knew that he deserved a severe drubbing; and now that his enemies were so numerous and powerful, he feared that Frank would give it to him.

The case was this. For a fortnight past, Frank had been much interested in making a kite; he had spent all the spare time he could get from school and from his father's shop, in working upon it, and had at last succeeded in making an excellent one. It was well-proportioned, being four feet in length, with its bow curving beautifully at the top. The frame was slender and the paper thin, so that the kite was light and buoyant. The tail, which served to steady it, was long and slender, and ornamented by a large tassel at the end. And as the kite moved on in its course, this long train waved beautifully in the air below. It was the best one that he had ever made,

and being new, he valued it very highly. He had flown it but once, and that was on the preceding Wednesday, when he found that it rose without any difficulty, and soared like an eagle high in the air, and seemed but a mere speck in the sky, while all the boys stood below, gazing up at it with admiration.

The next Saturday Frank went away for his father, and could not, therefore, fly it himself. He lent it, however, to his brother James, who was two years younger, who, with another boy of about the same age, went away to an open field, where they spent an hour or two, enjoying their sport. As they were pulling in the kite, intending to go home, this Dick, of whom I have spoken, with two other boys, with bows and arrows in their hands, appeared at the farther side of the field, coming out of the wood. They were from the lower part of the town, and had been out a hunting. When they saw the kite, they ran with eagerness to the boys who held the string, expressing their admiration of it, and entreating them to let out the twine that it

might again rise. James, however, refused, saying that his father had told him to come home an hour before sunset, and that it was then time to go. The three boys were not satisfied with this ; but having no regard to God, and seeking to do their own will merely, they began to be very insolent, and even abusive ; and at last Dick said, that if James did not let out the kite, he would shoot his arrow through it. His two companions were much pleased with that, for they thought the kite was an excellent mark, and threatened to do the same thing. James, now, was in trouble ; but as his father had requested him to come home at such an hour, he wished to please him, even though he lost his kite by so doing ; he therefore continued to wind up the string, telling the boys, however, that the kite belonged to Frank, and warning them against injuring it. They paid no regard to this, but fixing their arrows to the string, began to shoot as it approached ; but in consequence of its continual waving to and fro in the air, they shot many times in vain. This, however, only gave additional zest to their

sport, and increased their eagerness to hit it; leading them to take surer aim, and to draw the string with greater force. At last, one boy sent his arrow, with great speed, straight through the paper, cutting a neat round hole. Soon another one passed through, with less force, cutting a long slit as it went. The kite now began to waver in the air; and Dick, being somewhat nettled that his efforts, thus far, had been in vain, and knowing that his time was short, drew his bow with stronger force, (and it was the best bow there, being made of tough horn-beam,) and took surer aim, and let it drive. The heavy hard-wood arrow struck the back-bone in the middle, snapt it in two, and down came the kite tumbling to the ground. Dick and his two companions gave a shout of laughter, and walked off, leaving the other two to their sorrow.

The fate of Frank's kite was quickly known through the school, and every boy glowed with indignation towards Dick. When, therefore, the three boys caught him, on the night that I have mentioned, and dragged him back to their companions, it is

not at all wonderful that he should tremble, in view of meeting so many whom he had offended. The efforts which he made to escape were, however, in vain, and he was roughly jostled along to the centre of the green, where he was quickly surrounded by the angry boys, and confronted to Frank. To escape, then, seemed impossible, for they all hemmed him in, in an excited crowd, so that he expected to receive as he deserved. In ordinary circumstances, he feared not to fight with Frank, for they were of nearly the same age, and though he knew that Frank was a brave boy and very strong of his size, yet he thought he could give as much as he should receive, in a contest; but now, seeing none around him but angry countenances, and hearing nothing but vengeful threats, his heart sank within him, his courage died away, and he stood there completely unnerved, whimpering away in sadness, and waiting for his punishment.

“Now, Frank, give it to him,” cried one boy.

“Now is your chance to take your revenge to the full, Frank,” cried another.

"Yes, and if he had destroyed *my* kite so, I would beat him till his very bones ached," said a third.

"I did n't mean to break the back-bone, I am sure; and I did n't think I could hit it, either," said the prisoner.

"Did n't mean to break the back bone, and did n't think you could hit it, either!!" exclaimed one of his enemies in a most contemptuous tone; "why did you shoot at it, then? I'd stop his mouth, Frank, very quick, if he lets such words escape from it."

"Why, Frank, why do n't you give it to him? what are you waiting for? I hope you are not afraid of him," said another boy.

Notwithstanding the fair opportunity that Frank now had, of inflicting full and merited punishment on Dick, and the certainty there was, that he could do it with safety, he was manifestly reluctant to engage in the strife. His companions noticed this; but thinking that it proceeded from a kind of awkwardness in striking the first blow, endeavored to engage them in the contest by pushing one at the other with

violence. Frank's reluctance became momentarily more apparent, so that the boys suspected that it proceeded from other motives than mere awkwardness, and began to put jeering questions, and make taunting remarks as to cowardice. And when he declared plainly that he did not wish to fight, they all burst into a loud and sneering laugh; one and another exclaiming:

"Frank, what has got into you? It seems to me that you have turned coward all at once. Why are you afraid? you can whip ten of him."

The boys thought that it was mere want of courage that induced him to act thus, and hoped to lead him to fight, some, by ridicule, and others, by reminding him of his former bravery; but they altogether misunderstood him; it was not fear that influenced him at this time, but another principle. For a week or two past he had been more attentive to the instructions which he had received at the Sabbath school, and had read the bible with more interest than usual; and as he read it, he could not help feeling that it was a message from God to

him. He fully and cordially believed all that it taught. He seemed to feel that there was a God, and that God saw him continually. If he looked up into the sky and saw the clouds floating over his head, he felt that it was God who made them, and moved them on. If he walked through the woods, and heard the birds singing in their joy, he believed that it was God who made them, and gave them their beauty and happiness. If he played upon the green with his companions, he believed that God was the creator of them all, and that they ought to look upon one another with kindness and love. It did seem to him to be wrong for them to engage in beating one another in anger; especially when he remembered the plain commands of the Saviour, that all should dwell in love, and that we should be kind to our fellow men, even if they persecuted us. And when he read an account of the manner in which the Saviour lived and died,—how patiently he suffered all the injuries which were inflicted upon him by his fellow men,—and how cordially he forgave them all their unkindness, he could

not but believe that God and the Saviour wished him to be kind to every one, and continually to exercise such feelings as would lead him to do good to all, even though they should much injure him. And when he read in the Bible that God had appointed a day in which he intends to call all to account for their conduct, and reward such as believe and obey him, while he punishes the disobedient, he fully believed it, and feared to do that which was displeasing to him.

It was not, therefore, a fear of Dick which prevented his fighting, but a regard to God. And as to the charge of cowardice which the boys cast upon him, there never was a more groundless one; on the contrary, he soon manifested more tokens of boldness than they all. To have engaged in fighting under such circumstances, was a very easy thing, which the greatest coward in school could have done; but to come out alone and withstand the jeers and ridicule of all his associates, and boldly refuse to fight, because God had forbidden it, required genuine courage, stern stuff,—such

as the Saviour and the apostles had, and such as all good men have, and such as God likes to see in all his creatures.

Frank's companions, however, did not understand this, but supposed, as I have said before, that he was influenced by mere timidity, and endeavored to urge him on by ridicule. It was, however, in vain; for he believed, as the Scriptures taught, that God saw them, though they saw not him; and remembering the will of God, that all should live in love, he was strengthened by that thought, and with firmness and decision, told the boys just how he felt.

"I cannot fight," said he; "I do not wish to."

"Do n't wish to!" exclaimed a dozen voices in surprise; "why not?"

"Because I think it is wrong."

"Ho, ho, Frank! that is a good one; won't fight, because it is wrong. You are *afraid*, that is all. Wrong! why, does n't Dick deserve it? was n't he to blame for spoiling your kite? and ought he not to be flogged? Now, Frank, that is all

nonsense of yours; come, cheer up,—take courage, and give it to him; don't turn coward so."

"No, I cannot fight. You think it is through fear, but it is not so; I am not afraid of Dick; I never was, and am not now. I refuse to fight because I think it is wrong. If I understand the bible, I believe God forbids it."

"I know it would be wrong for you to fight, if he had not injured you; but since he has, you have a right to defend yourself."

"But the Saviour teaches, that we must love even our enemies, and if any one injures us, we must kindly forgive him, and do him good if we have an opportunity. I know that Dick has done me an injury; I think that he is very much to blame for spoiling my kite; but so far as I can understand the bible, I believe that 'God will be better pleased if I kindly forgive him, than if I engage in a fight.'"

"If a boy destroys your kite in that manner, I think he deserves a flogging; and if

you will not give it to him, you ought to lose your kites."

"So I think, Frank," exclaimed another boy; "but Dick shall not escape; if you will not flog him, I will."

So saying, he marched up to him, and gave him first a kick, then a thump in the breast, and after that a blow upon the side of the head; which Dick, at first, resenting, other boys joined in, every one who chose giving him a thump or a kick; so that the poor fellow was bandied about among half a dozen of them, till he was obliged to cry out from pain. Frank walked slowly away towards home; all the others stood about there, laughing and encouraging their companions in their wicked conduct; and when at last Dick made his way through the crowd and fled screaming from them, they uttered a shout of triumph, as though they had accomplished some great thing. But God knew all that was done, though the boys did not think of it.

James, the brother of Frank, was present during all this scene, and rather encouraged his companions in chastising Dick, and felt

a good deal of satisfaction, when he heard him cry out from the sufferings which he endured. As he walked home, however, the whole scene gradually passed from his mind, for he supposed that the matter would end there ; but in that he was mistaken, for Dick regarded him as the author of his sufferings, by telling who it was that destroyed the kite ; and as he smarted under the chastisement which he had received, his heart burned with revenge toward the author of it. He thought of it all the evening, and when he lay down at night, instead of going to the invisible God in calm and peaceful prayer, he was plotting mischief towards James.

Frank went to bed a happy boy ; for before he retired to rest, he prayed honestly, sincerely, for himself and Dick, and all his companions ; for though God is unseen, Frank believed that he knew all that was done by every being, and therefore Frank acted continually as though God was immediately present with him, and was visible. Thus exercising the feelings which he believed were pleasing to God, he had a

clear conscience, and peace of mind; for God has so formed us all, men and boys, that when we exercise holy feelings, as love to God and one another, and forgiveness of injuries, and humility, we experience a peace of mind, a happiness of soul, that we cannot obtain in any other way. All the feelings which God commands the boys to exercise, are happy feelings; and the feelings which he forbids, are unhappy ones. Frank felt, in some measure, as God required, and therefore he was at peace; his sleep was light and refreshing, and he rose in the morning as cheerful as the robin, believing that God was the author of all things about him, of his own existence, and of all the blessings which he enjoyed. He and his younger sister were happily at work in the garden, hoeing out the weeds from among the water-melon vines, and talking of the happy times they would have a month hence, when the melons would be fully ripe, and when they would share them with their play-mates at some evening party.

James had gone to the pasture with the cow, for it was his turn to drive her that morning, and had been gone longer than usual, so much so, that Frank and his sister often looked over the garden wall, in the direction in which he would return, and expressed surprise at his long delay. At length they heard the distant cry of some one in distress, and running to the gate, looked up the road, where they saw their brother running over the hill, crying bitterly; his nose was bloody, and he seemed to be in great pain; moreover, as they approached him, they found that he had received a blow near the eye, which had caused it to swell and become of a livid color. James was crying so grievously that he could not answer the many questions which they asked concerning the cause of it; they therefore hastened home, and did all that for him which his case required. When he became more at ease, he told them the whole story. It seems that Dick, urged on by a desire of vengeance, had risen early, and gone to the woods, where he obtained a tough switch, and then crossing several

fields, had entered the road along which James was to pass to the pasture, and there waited just the other side of the hill, for his appearance. When he heard the cow-bell approaching, he lay snugly down behind the fence, that he might be concealed till James had passed, for his heart was set on revenge, and he was determined that he should have no chance of escaping from his hands. When he knew that he was fully by, he leaped the fence, and running softly behind him, struck him, with all violence, across the shoulders. James, not knowing who he was, screamed out, and turning suddenly round, struck him in turn with a large stick which he always used in driving the cow; when, however, he saw Dick and knew his superior strength, he fled, and fear added speed to his flight, so that he was soon beyond his reach, although, for a rod or two, Dick kept pace with him, and buckled the switch painfully about his legs.

Dick, however, was by no means satisfied with what he had done, for the blow which he had received seemed as painful as any which he had given; he therefore whipped

the cow far away into the woods, for that would give trouble to his enemy, and then departed, apparently for home. After a long and troublesome search, James found the cow, drove her to the pasture, and then returned, whistling as he went, supposing no danger near. But he had not proceeded far, when he heard steps behind him; was suddenly pushed with violence in the shoulders, his heels tripped up, and he was thus brought headlong to the ground. His cheek-bone struck a stone as he fell, and produced the swelling which I have mentioned; and in addition to this, Dick immediately fell upon him, resisted his efforts to rise, and began to thump him in the back and sides, and last of all, in his face, beating him so unmercifully, that his nose bled profusely. He then rose and belabored him with his switch, till James jumped up and escaped from his reach, fleeing home almost in an agony.

Frank's heart was moved, as he saw the condition of his brother and heard the story of his abuse; indignation rose in his soul, and he resolved that the aggressor should

not be unpunished. He could not believe that God required him to stand and see his brother suffer while he had power to protect him. This determination was uppermost in his mind all the day, and he was upon the look-out for Dick continually. At school he told the story with such warmth of feelings, and determination of purpose, as to enlist on his side all the scholars ; and the indignation which all felt towards Dick, was ten-fold greater than before. Each one was eager to assist in bringing to punishment the wicked boy, and various plans were proposed for accomplishing the object.

The day passed away, however, and Dick continued to conceal himself from them all. In the mean time Frank's feelings became more calm, and during the quiet of the evening, he was enabled better to consider what ought to be done. Now Frank was accustomed to read a portion of his bible every evening, that he might learn from that what God would have him do ; for he had never seen God, and he knew that that was the only way in which he

could learn his will. He therefore turned his attention to those passages where the Saviour gave instruction concerning the forgiveness of injuries, and meditated upon those events in his life where he exhibited, in his conduct, the same meekness which he enjoined. As he thought of these things he doubted very much as to the rectitude of the course which he had purposed to pursue. His conscience did not condemn him as to his motives in the case, for he was conscious that his only motive was to protect his brother from suffering; and if he could be assured that Dick would no more be guilty of such conduct, he was perfectly willing to forgive all that he had done, and conduct towards him with the same kindness as towards any of his companions. But although he was conscious his motives were right, he doubted whether it would be in accordance with the will of God; especially did he so, when he considered the meekness and long suffering of the Saviour. The more he thought of these things, the more he hesitated as to his conduct; till at length he determined to ask his father, for

he was a good man, who believed and obeyed God, and Frank thought that he would guide him right.

Mr. Orson was a good Christian, and one who believed that it was wrong for men or boys to fight, and that it never ought to be done under any circumstances; and that God would protect all those who thus lived in peace, and deliver them from oppression; or if they were oppressed, that they ought to submit to it patiently as to the providence of God. There are many other good Christians who think that contention should be avoided, if possible; but that there are circumstances in which it is the will of God that men should fight to protect themselves against the wickedness of others. Mr. Orson, however, was of the former class, who think that it should never be done. When, therefore, Frank told him what had been his intention during the day, and what his feelings then were, his father replied that he wished he would do nothing about it, but try to gain the friendship of Dick and all his companions by kindness. He told him to conduct towards them in the

same manner in which he thought the Saviour would, were he there.

Frank's mind was now at rest, for he knew what to do, and was determined to go on, though he rather shrank from it; for he knew that the boys would ridicule and oppose him, especially after he had manifested so much determination, and warmth of feeling, as he had done during the day. The next morning he went to school with rather an uneasy mind, for he feared, that in some way, Dick would be brought among them, so that he would either be obliged to fight, or else incur the opprobrium of the whole school, by refusing to defend his brother, and to make good the determination which he had expressed the day before; either of which he deprecated.

His fears were not groundless, for as he approached the school-house, he heard the voices of many boys and girls engaged in earnest conversation; and the loud, and multiplied, and varied tones, in which they spoke, convinced him that it was no ordinary subject of interest. And as

he approached nearer, the expressions, "Dick"—and "I know where we can catch him,"—and "he is going a-fishing this afternoon, down to the old wharf,"—and "I know a better plan than that,"—which came successively to his ear, convinced him that the indignation of the school still continued to burn, and that they were by no means inclined to forget the matter, though he himself was willing to pass it over in peace. He entered the room with great reluctance and even with fear, for he dreaded to encounter the full tide of feeling which was flowing so directly against his course.

"Oh, Frank! Frank!" exclaimed a dozen voices, as he appeared at the door, we have an excellent plan this"—but in a moment, every voice was hushed, for the master entered; they all took off their caps and went quietly to their desks.

Frank was glad of this relief, for he wanted more time to gain courage, and to consider how to make his determination known; for he had no idea that there

would have been such an excitement among the scholars, but supposed that they would have cooled down much more than himself; when, therefore, he found the case as it was, he was taken, as it were, by surprise, and wanted to think more of the matter.

Before the time of recess arrived, he became more calm, and had acquired much resolution; he had, moreover, in a whispered conversation with the individual who sat at the same desk with him, made known his intention not to fight, and in some measure his reasons for so doing, though they seemed entirely unsatisfactory to him. He, therefore, expected that his intention would be made known in the intermission, and that he should encounter sneers and opposition; but he was, in a good degree, prepared for it all, though he regretted much that he must incur it.

Soon the signal for recess was given, and the boys went in a crowd from the door; the moment the one with whom Frank sat was fairly in the open air, he exclaimed,

“Oh, boys, Frank says he won’t fight!”

“Won’t fight! why?—pshaw, he will, I know,” exclaimed one of the larger and rougher boys.

“No he won’t; he *says* so; you may ask him.”

“I know better than that; Frank is no coward, and will not shrink from Dick, any day. And then, why in the world should not he fight? Won’t he defend his brother?”

“I do not know why, I am sure; but he says he thinks it is wrong.”

“Pshaw! he does n’t; I know better. Here, Frank! where is he?”

“Here he is,” said several voices among the crowd, and at the same time they gave way, opening a space among them, and left Frank standing in their midst. The large boy approached him saying,

“Frank, this fellow says that you have turned coward, and are afraid to fight with Dick;—is it so? won’t you defend your brother?”

Frank was rather troubled, and intimidated by the manner and tone of the boy

who questioned him ; but yet he replied with a good degree of boldness, saying,

“ I am not afraid of him ; but I think I shall not fight.”

“ *Not afraid, but think you shall not fight!*” exclaimed the boy in a half contemptuous tone ; “ and why, I should like to know, if you are not afraid ? ”

“ Because I fear it is wrong.”

“ *Because I fear it is wrong!*” repeated the boy in a mincing tone ; “ rather because you fear you will get whipped,” said he, with contempt. And at the same moment, a shout of sneering laughter burst from most of the boys ; many of whom exclaimed,

“ Oh, *Frank*, you have turned coward.”

A withering fear pervaded Frank’s heart, as he heard their contemptuous laugh and exclamations ; his courage wilted and seemed ready to die, and he began to regret the intention which he had formed. He was, however, sustained by the consciousness, that the charge brought against him was false, and that it was not cowardice, but a good principle of action, that influ-

enced him in this matter. Moreover, as he remembered the truth which he had learned from the Bible, and thought of the Saviour, and the relations which he sustained to him, his courage revived; and the more he thought of these things, his boldness increased, till at length he became quite calm and easy, and even began to rejoice that his purpose was made known, and that he had sustained the brunt of their ridicule without manifesting indecision or timidity.

For a time he said nothing, but endured their many jeers and scornful remarks with patience, knowing that it would be in vain to utter his voice amid their noise and excitement; but when their reproaches and exclamations of contempt had, in a measure, subsided, he prepared a reply, and had just commenced a vindication of his conduct, when the bell tolled, and they were obliged to go in.

It was well for Frank that it was so; for, in their then excited state, they would not have heard, with candor, anything which he might have said. Their indignation towards Dick had been wrought up

to a very high pitch. Frank, himself, had been the means of it; and it was from sympathy with him and his brother, that their plans for the gratification of this indignation had been formed. When, therefore, he made known the change in his determination, they were by no means pleased with it; and not at all inclined to hear, favorably, anything which he might say. Before the school closed, however, they had time to think of his conduct; and the warmth of their feelings had, in some measure, abated; so that when they issued from the door at noon, and collected upon the green, Frank had more hope of being heard. The first sound, however, which reached his ear, was rather startling; for he had got no farther than the entry, when he heard some one from without exclaim,

“Halloo, where is the coward?”

“I don’t know. He has hid his face; he is ashamed to be seen,” said some one.

“Oh, no he has n’t; he lets the sun shine upon it at mid-day. There he is,—see! he knows he *ought* to hide it, though,—I know by his looks.”

"How does he look?"

"Look! why, he looks like a coward."

"Well, shouldn't the sun shine upon a coward?"

"No; for it shows his shame."

"Yes, it should."

"Should! why?"

"That he may see to run away."

"Oh, boys, why do you talk so?" interrupted one of the larger scholars. "I don't think Frank deserves all this; you know, full well, that he is n't a coward."

"Yes, he is; there he goes now,—*running away*," said some one pointing to Frank, who was now walking slowly towards home.

"If he *should* run, I do not think he would be to blame, when you talk in this manner about him, and will not hear what he may say in his defence."

"Because he has nothing to say; you can't defend a coward."

"Prove, first, that he is a coward."

"That is obvious; he will not defend his brother."

“Well, you ought to hear his reasons for it, before you brand him with *that* title.”

“Well, let us hear what he can say for himself.”

“Here, Frank ; come back here,” shouted his friend, who had first spoken in his behalf.

Frank returned with a fearless heart, while the boys began gradually to move towards him.

“Frank, let us hear why you will not fight ; tell us honestly all about it.”

“That I shall be glad to do ; and, though I do not expect to satisfy you all, yet I think I can some of you. The plain reason is this,—*I think it is wrong to fight.* I believe that the bible came from God, and that what is there taught, we should believe and obey. I believe that that book is the principal means we have of learning his will,—and that we are there plainly taught, that we ought not to fight. Jesus told the people, that it was the will of God that we should love and do good to all men, even to our *enemies* ; and that if any persecuted us, we should not retaliate, but overcome their

wickedness, by acts of kindness; and in all his life, he practised what he taught. I believe that I ought to obey him, and imitate his example; and therefore it was, that I refused to fight with Dick, night before last. I was sorry to have my kite destroyed, and, when I heard of it, I was at first as indignant as any of you were, and determined to whip him; but when I remembered the precepts of the bible, I thought it wrong to do so, and concluded that I would not. But yesterday morning, when I saw his abuse of my brother, my indignation was roused to its highest pitch, and I *determined* that Dick should suffer; for I could not believe that God required me to see that and stand by, in peace. I could not think that I ought to leave my brother without protection, when I could afford it. I thought that I *ought* to punish Dick, and had I caught him yesterday, I should have done it with *vengeance*, I assure you; for I am not afraid of him,—I have whipped him many a time. I did not see him, however, all the day; he kept out of my sight. Last evening I was thinking of

the subject again, and, as I thought, I became in doubt, as to what I ought to do. The more I thought, the more I doubted, till at length I asked my father. He said he thought it was wrong for me to fight, and wished that I would do nothing about it, but try to gain Dick's friendship by kindness. When I heard his opinion, my mind was at rest, and I determined to do as I have done. For these reasons, I intend not to fight; not through fear, but because I think it wrong."

"And those are reasons enough for anybody, I am sure," said Frank's friend. "If a boy thinks it wrong to fight, and does not wish to,—why should he? and why do you all turn against him, and brand him with cowardice? I believe that he is as brave as any of you. The fact that he won't fight, is no proof at all that he has turned coward. So, Frank, cheer up; I will be on your side for one."

"Well, I would fight, I know, if any one should abuse my brother so."

"So would I," said Frank's friend; "but if any boy thinks it wrong, and does

not wish to, why not let him do as he pleases?"

"He may do as he pleases; but I think he is a coward, notwithstanding."

After a little more conversation, in which various opinions were expressed concerning Frank's conduct, the boys separated and went home; each one thinking of the matter. Some thought that he was a fool, and were vexed at his conduct; others thought that he was conscientious, and loved him more for the spirit which he manifested; while all esteemed him for his moral courage, which enabled him to do what he thought was duty, in the face of all their opposition and ridicule. For a month or six weeks he was frequently called "The coward," by a number of the boys; but he endured this patiently, and manifested kindness toward them all; so that ere long that name was dropped. The number of his friends increased,—and he was loved more than he had ever been before. He, himself, had a clear conscience, peace of mind, and was a happy boy.

## CHAPTER VI.

## A TALK WITH THE BOYS.

ONE afternoon the minister of the town went out about two miles from the village, to make a parochial visit. It was in the latter part of summer, and near the close of the day, on Saturday. It was a calm and quiet evening; and being in some measure prepared for the duties of the Sabbath, he thought he should enjoy a leisure walk through the fields; he therefore returned that way, and soon came to the river, the eastern bank of which he followed down for nearly a mile. The land was undulating, abounding in many large knolls; so that, in the course of his walk, he successively passed through pleasant valleys and over high mounds. Some of the former were thickly wooded, and he descended into their groves, darkened by the shadow of a neighboring hill, where all was silent, save the occasional chirp of a bird, or of a frisking squirrel. Walking for a time

through that, where the quiet was in unison with his own tranquillity and peace, he began again to ascend a hill; and emerging from the grove, he mounted its summit, where he enjoyed an extended prospect,—looking down upon the river, which flowed quietly beneath him, and across its waters far away over the valley that stretched itself to the distant horizon. The western sky was beautiful; the fleecy clouds, that were buoyant there, were dyed in the various colors of the setting sun. And as he saw this beautiful specimen of the works of his God,—and learned thus the skill and taste of the Divine Architect,—associated with it the omnipotence and benevolence of his heavenly Father,—his soul was filled with peace, and his heart rose in admiration and love to that invisible Being, whom he believed to be the author of his own existence, and of all that he saw around him. On every hill he stopped for a time to behold the beauties on every hand, and then descended into the succeeding valley, peacefully meditating upon the character of his God as thus made known to him.

It was a quiet and retired scene. The brute creation seemed at rest, and the only human beings in view were a party of children who were rowing down the river in a boat. Every time he climbed the hill, and stood viewing the west, their youthful cheerful voices rose from the water below to his ear; his eyes dropped to their boat, and he gazed upon them with feelings of kindness and love. He believed that the same God who had beautifully painted the western sky, was also the author of their existence; and he desired that they might know and love their Father. He was pleased to notice, as he ascended each succeeding hill, that they approached nearer and nearer to the eastern bank. He hoped that they would land, that he might have an opportunity of conversing with them. Nor was he disappointed. Some distance before him was a large knoll, over whose top and sides was spread a large chesnut grove. From this hill a small green promontory, or point of land, projected some way into the river; and the minister saw that towards this point they directed their course.

They landed, and climbing, each one with his tin pail or basket in hand, to the top of the hill, they seated themselves for rest beneath a large tree. They had been sitting but a short time when the minister was seen coming round the side of the hill towards them. As he approached, some of the boys looked up with gladness, as to a friend; while the others assumed a serious cast of countenance, for they thought the minister was a gloomy man, and no friend of the boys.

"Well, boys, where have you been, this afternoon?" said he, as he approached, with a pleasant and happy countenance.

"We have been up the river for blueberries—would n't you like some?" said they, extending their baskets to him.

"I thank you—I should like a few," replied he, tasting some from each basket. "What delicious ones they are! Where did you find them?"

"We picked them about a mile above here, in Mr. Hodge's pasture. They are very thick indeed there."

"You must have enjoyed it much, I think, in so pleasant an afternoon as this. I remember what fine times I used to have when I was a boy. We often were dismissed from school at four o'clock; and oftentimes too, my companions and I would rise before the sun in the morning, and set off for the woods, where we picked a quart or two before breakfast."

"*You!*—did you ever pick berries?" interrupted a little boy, with surprise.

"Yes; and many a happy time I have had in so doing; so that I love to think of the scenes through which I have passed in my childhood. And yet there are many things which it makes me sad to think of."

"Sad! why, sir, if you had happy times then?"

"Because we often did things which were wrong; and I fear that none of us had that regard to God which we ought to have. Moreover, many of my companions, whom I loved very much indeed, are dead; and of those who are now living, some of them seem to have no regard to God at all.

They apparently neglect prayer, and pay no attention to religion, except from mere habit. When they go to the house of God, it seems to be done more from custom, than from any desire to worship that invisible Being, who continually watches over them, keeps them in existence, and supplies all their wants. And I believe that if they continue in this course, when God calls them from the world he will award them that punishment which he feels bound to inflict upon rational beings who neglect to do their duty. Besides men, God has made a great many other intelligent beings. Some of them are angels, purely spiritual; others, who inhabit the stars around us, have, I believe, bodies and souls, and are, in some respects, like ourselves, though I know not *how far* they resemble us. All these beings—angels—the inhabitants of the planets around us, and men of this world, are, I believe, made capable of knowing and performing their duty; and God is everywhere present, watching over their conduct; and he will deal with us all according to our characters. Some of the angels have already

done wrong, and they have been cast out of heaven, and are reserved for punishment unto the great Day of Judgment."

"If they repent and believe in Christ, will they not be saved?"

"I do not know. The bible teaches us that Christ died for man, and that whatever *man* repents and believes in him, may be saved; but it does not say so in regard to the angels."

"But why should n't the angels be saved as well as man?"

"Perhaps God did do something by which they might have been saved, if they had repented; *perhaps* he did tell them all, that if they would turn to him, and obey him, and always do what they knew to be right, that he would forgive them, and receive them to favor. I say, *perhaps* it was so, for the bible does not say anything about it, one way or the other. But however that may have been, I believe God has done that which is right about it. I believe that they are bad beings, and wilfully do what they know to be wrong; and that is the reason why God punishes them. So in

regard to men; the reason why God punishes them is, that they are unwilling to do their duty. If they would only turn to him, and keep his commandments, he would freely forgive all their past sins; for the Saviour has done that which will render it safe for him so to do."

"Does God watch all our conduct, and will he punish everything which is wrong?"

"Yes; though he is invisible, yet he is everywhere present, observing the conduct of all his creatures;—not only their external actions, but also their thoughts and feelings; and if he sees anything wrong, even an improper desire, he is very much displeased, and will in all cases punish it with severity, unless where he has provided a way of pardoning it. Now, in regard to all the sins of *man*, however great they are, God knows that in consequence of the atonement of Christ, he can freely forgive them; and desiring that his creatures should be happy, he has told us in his word that he *will* pardon every one who will repent; that is, 'cease to do evil, and learn to do well.' But if they will

not repent, but continue to live regardless of the rights of God and their fellow-men, he cannot forgive them. He knows, and all the angels of heaven know, that it would be wrong to let them go unpunished. And the common conscience of all his creatures—of men on earth, and of evil beings in the world of wo—testifies to the same thing, that if any being does wrong, he ought to be punished; and that if God has power to punish them, his own holy nature requires him to do it.

“Suppose a dozen boys were travelling through a wilderness, and on their way should meet two men, who should begin to abuse them, robbing them of their clothes, and beating them with green switches till they cried out for pain; suppose also they set their dogs upon them, which bit their legs, and tore their flesh, till the blood ran; and all this for their amusement or profit, when the boys had never done anything to merit such conduct. This would be wrong, would it not?”

“Certainly,” said they all.

“Suppose now another man, who lived in a castle, on a rocky mountain, close by, should see all this,—and that he was a stout warrior, strong and powerful, and fully able to deliver these boys from the hands of the wicked men; would n’t it be right for him to do it?”

“Certainly.”

“And if the men would not desist, would it not be right for him to punish them?”

“Certainly.”

“Well, suppose he should see all that was going on; and yet should refuse to help the boys;—should you say that he was a good man?”

“No, by no means; for if he was able to defend the boys, he ought to do it.”

“Just so it is in regard to God. He knows that some of the creatures whom he has made are inclined to neglect their duty. They do not exercise that love to him and to one another which they ought to do. They have little or no regard to the rights of their Creator, as the Eternal Ruler of all things, and little to the rights of their fellow-creatures; but in all things follow their

own desires, even when they are contrary to the will of God; and if others are made unhappy thereby, they regard it not. Now, God knows that such beings ought to be punished, and he feels that he, as their almighty Creator, is the one who ought to do it; and he has declared in the bible that he is determined to. He says 'he will by no means clear the guilty;' still, in consequence of what Christ has done, he says he can and will pardon all who repent and do their duty,—who, as St. Paul did, keep a conscience void of offence toward God and man.

“Whether an atonement was ever made for the sinning angels, I do not know; or whether the inhabitants of the stars above have sinned, I cannot tell; the bible says little about it. But in regard to man, the case is that all have sinned, an atonement has been made for us, and God promises that whoever will repent, and return to the path of duty, shall be forgiven; and when we pass from this life, shall be admitted to a far happier state of being, where we shall know God more perfectly than we do here,

and shall have intercourse with holy angels and perfect men.

“I wish you would all think of these things, and study your bibles, and see if it is not so; and if you have reason to think it is, live accordingly, and you will find great peace in so doing.

“To-morrow is the Sabbath, a day which God wishes all to improve by growing in a knowledge of the truth. I hope, therefore, that you will observe the day aright. And remember to look to God by prayer for his blessing; for unless you do, it will be in vain.”

So saying, they separated, and walked home, each his own way. What effect the conversation had upon the boys, I do not know, but I hope it did them good.

THE END.









